

Stefan T. Possony :
Lenin :
The Compulsive
Revolutionary

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Revolutionizing

The war did not come as a surprise to the Central Powers. They had, however, incorrectly estimated the number and strength of their opponents : they had expected a less burdensome war. Hence the Central Powers decided to engage in subversion and “revolutionizing.” This by no means constituted a departure from precedent, especially in Russia : Karl von Clausewitz, pondering the lesson of Napoleon’s war with Russia in 1812, had maintained that Russia could not be conquered, but “only subdued by its own weaknesses and by the effects of internal dissension.”⁽¹⁾

The decision to revolutionize is reflected by August 5, 1914, in several telegrams sent by the German military and in the traffic of the German Foreign Office, as well as the Austrian government. The first definitive German statement on revolutionizing appeared on July 29, when the Emperor rejected the request of a general who wished to leave Turkey : “He must stay and also fan the war and the revolution against England” (“*Krieg and Aufstand schüren*”). On August 8, 1914, Wilhelm wrote in the margin of an ambassadorial report from Vienna that the revolutionizing of Poland and the Ukraine should be financed on a larger scale. However, the revolutionizing operations predated the war by several months, notably in the Ukraine and in the Caucasus.⁽²⁾

The operations which had been conducted in countries like Russia for many years were *not* a prelude to revolutionizing : due to the war, the German operatives were compelled to leave, many of their agents were mobilized, and revolutionaries went underground or moved to other countries. The psychological climate had changed : a far more serious and radical operation had become necessary. For all practical purposes, the Germans had to make a fresh start.

They began by trying to locate revolutionaries, from whom they requested information from persons they considered knowledgeable.

Contacts included bishops, rabbis, professors, Nobel Prize laureates, politicians, foreign diplomats, former agents, prisoners of war, deserters, and many classifiable as “swindlers, impostors, and fools.” Schemes were hatched and discarded, gullible German agents were exploited by crooks, policies were continually altered and failures were more frequent than were successes.

The risings and revolutions that did occur were not “created” by the German Foreign Office, the “AA” or Wilhelmstrasse, as it was also called. Revolution is too complex a phenomenon to be caused entirely and specifically by human design—no matter how carefully organized. All the AA could do was to put at the revolutionaries’ disposal money, legitimization papers, publication facilities, travel arrangements, communications and occasional information, weapons, and strategic decisions. But it *did* all this, becoming as a result the most important revolutionary agency of its time, substantially more significant than any of the “professional” revolutionary organizations. The stark fact is that the German Foreign Office was using many of these organizations for its own purposes.

The German and Austrian diplomats were not alone in their endeavors : the military occasionally participated, especially when requiring intelligence or contemplating sabotage. Individual politicians, using government funds, operated to some extent independently. Industrial concerns supported revolutionaries, assisted the AA, contributed funds (e.g., for the purchase of newspapers). Socialists, aristocrats, professors and artists were using their “international connections,” sometimes in conjunction with the Foreign Office and at other times for their own purposes. The Wilhelmstrasse attempted coordination of the maze of activity, but often the revolutionizers were working at cross-purposes.

The German diplomats, experts in revolution, did not select any one revolutionary to overthrow the government of his country. They assumed unpredictability and so supported many revolutionary persons and movements, betting, as it were, on all the horses in the race. They

did *not* put these revolutionaries on their payroll, win them over to the cause of the German Emperor, dictate what they should or should not write, or issue orders guiding specific actions. The Germans used well instructed agents to influence decisions and events, but they left the revolutionaries to their own ideologies, tactics, and devices. Only rarely were direct contacts made ; seldom were the revolutionaries cognizant of the source of the unexpected assistance. Many revolutionaries were willing to accept any help offered, on the grounds that they were upholding their own convictions and were actually using the Germans for their own ends. The Germans recognized this attitude, and to strengthen their political warfare capabilities, stimulated sentiments of this nature.

On the other hand, Germans were careful to select intermediaries or liaison agents who were realistic and cynical, willing to ally themselves with the Germans for the attainment of common objectives, and who had sufficient political ambition to carry out their assignments with the required zest.

Revolutionizing functions were not restricted to the fomenting of social revolution. In fact, the Germans, at first reluctant to foster socialism and anarchy, showed far greater interest in supporting national liberation movements. Eventually social and national revolutionizing were equally supported. Many cross-connections existed between the two efforts.

Revolutionizing entailed, however, more than lending support to the revolutionaries : it also required the infiltration and paralysis of the hostile government and military high command. A revolutionizing effort could succeed only if the “ruling class,” while under attack, became psychologically defeatist.⁽³⁾ (This was—during World War I—the condition of the tsarist regime but was not true of France and Italy.) The operations which the Germans undertook to weaken the tsarist regime were complex ; the actual operations have been obscured by many legends. But massive German infiltration, espionage, and policy sabotage occurred, partly facilitated by the corrupting presence of many

German Balts at the Russian court and in the bureaucracy, and partly by attempts to produce a separate peace with Germany. German connections with Russian financiers and banks, as well as the Tsarina's addiction to occultism and other mystical charlatanry, made possible many seemingly incredible operations.⁽⁴⁾

Between subversion above and revolutionizing from below, cross-connections arose from time to time. General Bonch-Bruyevich was close to leading generals who, in 1917, were instrumental in engineering the abdication of the Tsar. Certainly influenced by his Bolshevik brother, he contributed much to the poor military planning.⁽⁵⁾ Some of the spies who operated around the Minister of War (who himself may have been maneuvered by the Germans) later participated in revolutionizing and, in a concealed fashion, in the German operation with Lenin. At one time, the person in the Russian legation at Bern supervising the activities of revolutionaries was in contact with the Germans. The Russian Minister of the Interior and one or two of his assistants heading the Okhrana were intent upon establishing a separate peace ; they manipulated revolutionaries accordingly. And there were many similar cross-connections.

Other tactics were utilized : an immense peace propaganda at the front ; bribery of Russian commanders to induce them to surrender fortifications (Kovno, for example); attempts, on the part of Russia's allies—especially Britain—to keep Russia in the war, so that urgent reforms which would perhaps remove the Tsar and Tsarina by a palace revolution could be instituted ; popular dissatisfaction with poor government and poorer economic conditions ; the impact of the war and of numerous defeats ; and the massive dislocation of population, especially the removal of a large portion of the Jewish population from the border areas (to which they had been, more or less, restricted by law) to the interior of Russia. The efforts of the German Foreign Office must be seen in the perspective of this complex situation.

1 On some of the uses of this technique by Bismarck, see Gustav Adolph Rein, *Die Revolution in der Politik Bismarcks* (Göttingen : Musterschmidt, 1957), especially Chapters IV and V.

2 By June, or possibly as late as July, the Austrians spent 300,000 kronen to smuggle weapons into the Ukraine and were trying, amateurishly and unsuccessfully, to provoke a mutiny on the Black Sea fleet. In addition, there are indications, mentioned before, that the Austrians—and the Germans—had their hands in the strikes which occurred shortly before the outbreak of war.

3 The term “defeatism” was coined by Grigory Alexinsky, Bolshevik member of the second Duma and subsequently a firm opponent of Lenin.

4 Some of the salient events are described by W.K. Korostowetz, *Lenin im Hause der Väter* (Berlin : Kulturpolitik, 1928), esp. Chapters VII and VIII ; and Mikhail D. Bonch-Bruyevich, Petrograd, *Erinnerungen eines Generals* (Berlin : Verlag des Ministeriums für nationale Verteidigung, 1959), Ch. 5-9. Korostowetz was an official of the Petrograd Foreign Office and specialized in communications intelligence. He was related to many high-ranking officials and aristocrats, and his information is, on the whole, dependable. General Bonch-Bruyevich, brother of Lenin’s comrade, had many counter-intelligence assignments. A liberal during the war, he later joined the Bolsheviks and became something like the premier soldier of the Red army. The information by the two authors is largely corroborative.

5 Nicholas N. Golovine, *The Russian Campaign of 1914* (Fort Leavenworth, Kansas Command and General Staff School Press, 1938), p. 40.

Lenin : The Compulsive Revolutionary

Contacts with Austria

A few weeks before the outbreak of the war, there was created under Austrian auspices at Lvov, a Bund for the Liberation of the Ukraine. The purpose of this organization was to create a united front among the many revolutionary groups, and to stimulate an independence movement inside the Ukraine or, in case of an Austrian invasion or victory, to promote the installation of a suitable regime. It was not difficult, through salaries and other inducements, to organize enough Ukrainians, but the Austrian armies were halted. When Lvov fell temporarily to the Russians, the Bund decamped for Vienna. For a variety of reasons, including corruption among the revolutionaries and nationalistic conflicts in Vienna, the Bund was criticized within the Austrian Foreign Office, and it was removed to Constantinople. Turkey still was neutral, and it was hoped that it could be used as a base for revolutionary action against the Ukraine and the Russian fleet in the Black Sea.

These expectations were not fulfilled, but the move to Constantinople brought the Bund under the influence of Parvus, who had been residing there since 1910 and was now a wealthy businessman. During the Balkan wars he had specialized in grain purchases (and probably commodity and stock speculation), possibly had acted as a broker in arranging for oil concessions in Mesopotamia, and had given economic advice to the Turkish planners of railroad networks. It appears that he had worked together with the German embassy in various subterranean operations and shortly after the beginning of the war had assisted them in their efforts to purchase newspapers in the Balkans. Parvus wrote a short brochure for the Bund and suggested that the Bund publish a booklet by Martov. He also, rather foolishly, delivered public speeches and thus within a few weeks alerted the Okhrana to his activities. But he

offered professional advice to the amateurish Bund, using these services as a means of establishing for himself effective relations with Germany (from where he had been expelled). The Bund soon fell into eclipse, though for years it remained the object of derision for the “defencists” among the Russian revolutionaries. Its significance was that it represented the true initiating activity of the revolution.

As we have seen, Lenin arrived in Switzerland carrying only enough money for living expenses. He soon complained about the lack of funds required for organized activities. Yet suddenly, on November 1, 1914, he published the magazine *Sotsial Demokrat* and transmitted money for party purposes to Scandinavia. After the first issue of 500 copies, there was a lapse of five weeks, following which three issues of 1500 copies each were published within a week of each other ; another hiatus of five weeks then occurred. Thus, money came in irregularly, but sufficient sums were procured to resume political activity and establish a party organ.

On November 14, Lenin, according to Krupskaya, communicated the information “that the paper had been delivered at a point near the frontier and would soon be forwarded on.”⁽¹⁾ However, the accomplishment of such a feat would have certainly bordered on the miraculous : not only had enemy territory to be crossed in transporting the paper from Switzerland to the Russian frontier, but the long distance—not including detours—which was involved between the two points would make well nigh impossible the knowledge of their arrival within two weeks after dispatching the packages. (It required that much time for the Lenins themselves to proceed from Cracow to the Swiss border !) It is further difficult to believe that such a feat of transportation could have been accomplished under the aegis of an organization which had been badly splintered by the war.

Fortunately, the solution is found in an account which the Ukrainian Bund on December 14, 1914, submitted to the Austrian Foreign Office. The Bund report stated that of its total expenses of 220,000 kronen for

the period from September to December of 1914, 30,000 kronen were used for “support to other revolutionary organizations.” Under this heading, it was disclosed that the Social Democrats who joined the Bund did so on condition that their party would receive a subvention in order to enlist the cooperation of those who remained outside the organization. “The Bund has supported the majority fraction of Russian Social Democrats with money and assistance for communications with Russia. The leader of this fraction, Lenin, is not opposed to Ukrainian demands.” This sentence was preceded by the disclosure that the Bund was cooperating with Parvus, supporting his work.⁽²⁾

The report indicated that support had been extended to Georgian Social Democrats and that it had been decided to aid in the publication of an organ of Ukrainian Social Democrats in Constantinople or Switzerland.

The contribution to the Georgians presumably was small ; the group of “Ukrainian Social Democrats” was a bit mythological. Whether or not Lenin’s paper was, in fact, the contemplated “organ of Ukrainian Social Democrats,” the report, under this rubric, mentions money only *once* in connection with Lenin. The implication is that Lenin received the largest portion of this particular budget item : an amount not exceeding 5,700 dollars. In addition, the Bund paid for the transportation to Russia of two of his party members under another budget heading.

The problem sometimes arises about Lenin’s knowledge of the source of payment—a question that assumes naive innocence on the part of one of the most professional of revolutionaries. The Bund report which asserted that Lenin was not hostile to “Ukrainian demands” added for proof of Lenin’s attitude a speech which the Bund had reported in its paper.⁽³⁾ In Zurich, Lenin indeed had given a speech in support of Ukrainian independence ; it was reported by almost the entire Social Democratic press, including its two main organs, the Vienna *Arbeiter-Zeitung* and the Berlin *Vorwärts* (November 10, 1914). The *Hamburger Echo* (of the same day) juxtaposed the Lenin story with a report on a speech which Parvus made in Sofia, in which he stated that victory of

tsarism would constitute a crushing blow to the revolution, whereas the defeat of tsarism would expedite the transformation to democracy. Krupskaya disregards the Zurich speech, mentioning merely that Trotsky objected when Lenin termed Kautsky a traitor.⁽⁴⁾

The Ukrainian Social Democrat Yurkevich, uncovering the secret ties between the Bund and the Austrian government, thought it his duty to warn the revolutionaries. Yurkevich was a capable Marxist scholar with whom Lenin had been friendly for quite some time. He was nonplussed when Lenin berated him about his disclosures. After Lenin committed the tactical error of angrily telling Yurkevich that this information should not have been published, the two men severed their ties.⁽⁵⁾

The Austrians now were having trouble with their own Ukrainians (called “Ruthenians”) who were eager to attain independence. Vienna prepared to discontinue relations with the Bund. Two German revolutionizers investigated and by the middle of February, 1915, reported that henceforth the emphasis should be placed on the *overall* Russian revolution : the Bund had functioned to find the “bridge” which the revolutionizers had so long sought. In other words, the Bund put the Germans in touch with the *real* revolutionaries.

Between February 20 and March 3, 1915, Lenin assembled the leading Bolsheviks residing in Switzerland for a conference in Berne. The well-represented Okhrana reported extensively on the meeting.⁽⁶⁾ Among the topics discussed were defeatist agitation among troops and the distribution of revolutionary literature to prisoners of war.⁽⁷⁾ The latter task had been vigorously advocated by the Ukrainian Bund which had allocated during 1914 about 9,000 Austrian kronen for this purpose and had requested permission from the German government to begin this work in camps under German jurisdiction. In Berne, the Bolsheviks expressed their eagerness to produce literature for these prisoners.

The conference opposed pacifism, advocated revolutionary war, denied the possibility of a “so-called democratic peace without revolutions,” and proclaimed that the people of every country should engage in

revolutionary propaganda as a preliminary to civil war and the overthrow of government. Russia's victory would produce worldwide reaction ; hence, under all circumstances, Russia's defeat would represent the lesser evil. The Okhrana reported that, according to information revealed at the conference, 200 copies of *Sotsial Demokrat* were brought into Russia via Norway ; and Paris might be the distribution point of 600 to 700 copies in the future. The implication is that the bulk of the *tirage* was shipped via Sweden, Finland, and Rumania.

The conference was dominated by the proposal to publish a "popular organ" abroad to be sent through Norway into Russia ; simultaneously, an illegal paper was to be issued inside the country. This proposal presumably originated with Lenin and was an adaptation to wartime conditions of the *Iskra* and *Pravda* credos. Complaints ensued about the lack of good writers, but the material means were available, for both the newspaper plan and for the publication of brochures. The money source was Yekaterina F. Rozmirovich-Maish, a participant in the conference. She was the sister-in-law of Alexander A. Troyanovsky, a former artillery officer and future ambassador to the United States. Shotman says in his report that, while in Vienna, he lodged with the Troyanovskys.⁽⁸⁾ Another visitor was Arshak G. Surabov, a Bolshevik from the Caucasus (from Tiflis, according to the Okhrana, from Batumi, according to Shotman). He had participated in the Second Congress and was a member of the second Duma. Surabov then lived in Constantinople and was a friend of Parvus ; subsequently Surabov was a close assistant of Parvus in the latter's war operations, though finally they allegedly separated. Parvus was in 1915 a strong proponent of establishing a newspaper. The presumption is that Troyanovsky's sister-in-law, an insignificant party worker, was elected on the basis of personal contacts of long standing, to be the ostensible donor of money which was sent by way of Parvus.

This is just one interpretation. Other Ukrainian Bolsheviks who could have handled the financial liaison included a man named Bensya, and

more likely, Marian Melenevsky, whose party name was Bassok. Lenin met Bassok in January, 1915, and Bassok presumably offered financial aid.⁽⁹⁾ In an “Answer to Bassok,” written on January 12, Lenin claimed that they were not traveling on the same road, but, strangely, this note was not published until 1924. Bassok remained with the party, became a Soviet official, and was eventually purged by Stalin : when an attempt is made to construe an alibi, there usually is something to conceal.

The newspaper plan was not pursued. After rumors had been rampant for some time, on February 20, 1915, Alexinsky gave a public speech at Zurich, in which he disclosed detailed and damaging (though somewhat exaggerated) information about the Bund, Parvus, and the German-Austrian influence on Russian revolutionaries. Lenin was told the Bund story by “Tria” (V.D. Mgeladze), the Georgian socialist who was in full possession of evidence on the case—but who was *not* a Bolshevik. Consequently, Lenin could not rely upon him. On the contrary, he assumed that if he were to continue working with the Bund despite Tria’s warning, he would be very vulnerable. Security had been breeched : it was clearly advisable not to risk the exposure which the publication of a newspaper could entail.

Another feature of this Bolshevik conference merits attention. Maxim Litvinov, who had been a weapons smuggler during the 1905 revolution, was a participant who represented the Bolsheviks of London. Litvinov was living in London with another revolutionary, Nikolai Klyachko, who, ironically, worked as a technician at Vickers-Armstrong, Britain’s foremost gun manufacturer. The Okhrana repeatedly reported at later dates that Litvinov possessed expert knowledge of weapons, obtained a great deal of information from Klyachko, made many bicycle trips to British military camps, and reported the data to Lenin who, in turn, transmitted the intelligence to the Germans. The Okhrana may or may not have informed British authorities ; in any event, no action was taken against Litvinov. There exists a document in the German file that indicates that Lenin made intelligence available, but it contains no suggestion of British data being involved.⁽¹⁰⁾ Interestingly enough,

Litvinov on March 8, 1906, received at Dresden a German passport in the name of “Gustav Graf.” The implication of this Okhrana information is that the passport issued was genuine ; a direct tie with German intelligence is clearly a possibility. But, for the period of 1915-1916, the Okhrana file contains no precise information beyond the observations of Litvinov’s behavior.⁽¹¹⁾

Years before the war, the Spanish anarchist Miguel Almereyda (subsequently accused of treasonable activities with the Germans) commented to a friend who was excited about the ethical ideas of Leo Tolstoi : “Forget about Russian novels The revolution needs money.”⁽¹²⁾ Lenin, of course, agreed entirely with this opinion.

1 Krupskaya, p. 295. By the end of 1915, the Petrograd Bolsheviks had received fifteen issues of *Sotsial Demokrat* in several hundred copies (Futrell, p. 102).

2 Austrian Archive, Politisches Archiv, Krieg 8b, Karton 903, Ukrainische Aktion, *Provisorischer Bericht über die Tätigkeit des Bundes zur Befreiung der Ukraina*.

3 This attitude is still reflected, in a strongly attenuated form, in Krupskaya, p. 284.

4 *Ibid.*, p. 290.

5 Stepankowski, unpublished memoirs.

6 Paris to Petrograd, March 15, 1915. (Document in Hoover Institution) The dates of the conference are as given by the Okhrana. *See also* Tsiavlovsky, *op. cit.*, p. 160ff.

7 In an article in the Paris *Nashe Slovo* on February 9, 1915, Lenin supported, apparently for the first time, “fraternization” of soldiers at the front.

8 Shotman, *op. cit.*, p. 305. The time apparently was about August, 1913.

9 When traveling in Austria, Bassok conferred upon himself a patent of nobility and posed as “Ritter von Melenevsky.”

10 This document is printed in a watered-down English translation in Z.A.B. Zeman (ed.), *Germany and the Revolution in Russia 1915-1918, Documents from the Archives of the German Foreign Ministry*, London, Oxford, 1958, p. 16ff.

11 During the Kerensky regime, S.G. Svatikov investigated the Okhrana’s foreign department. (*See Reciteil de documents secrets tirés des Archives de l’ancien Ministère des affaires étrangères russe* (Geneva : Nouvelle Internationale, 1918).) Svatikov was a little naive, though he uncovered some interesting information. Litvinov complained to him about denunciations ; Svatikov (p. 42) identified Nicholas Selivanov as the informer in this case, suggesting that Selivanov was a German spy. Svatikov had no proof whatever for this statement and also neglected to note that Selivanov was working at Vickers-Armstrong, as well as for the Okhrana. According to the German file, K.D. Nabokov of the tsarist embassy felt that Selivanov’s information was dependable. The aggregation of Russian revolutionaries at Vickers is suspect and hardly accidental. It should be remembered that the Germans had difficulties in placing espionage agents in Britain. The use of Russians was a good technique. Nevertheless, the case against Litvinov remains unproven. On the possibility of Bolshevik espionage in Russia, *see* Futrell, p. 107f.

12 Victor Serge, *Mémoires d’un Révolutionnaire* (Paris : Club des Editeurs, 1957), p. 28.

Lenin : The Compulsive Revolutionary

Contacts with Germany

As soon as the war started, German Social Democrats journeyed abroad to convince their brethren in the International that the overthrow of tsarism was the most important challenge facing civilization and progress. Among this group of travelers was Dr. Karl Lehmann, Parvus' companion on his trip to Russia during the famine. Lehmann, whose wife had preceded Krupskaya as the secretary of *Iskra*, ventured to Austria and Italy ; presently following his convictions, he was killed as a soldier. It is not unlikely that he spoke of Lenin to the Wilhelmstrasse or the Prussian minister in Munich ; certainly he mentioned Lenin to Parvus' friend, Adolf Müller, Bavaria's foremost socialist editor and another of the emperor's socialist missionaries. Müller traveled west. Wilhelm Jansson, a trade unionist from Russia's Baltic provinces and, according to his passport, a Swedish citizen, went to Scandinavia, arguing for the destruction of tsarism and asking for support for the revolutionaries. On October 9, 1910, the German minister to Stockholm reported that Jansson had told him that the Finnish revolution could be accomplished only through the Social Democrats. In line with initial thinking at Berlin on independence movements, Jansson had investigated such a possibility for Finland, although he doubted that much progress could be achieved. On October 13, 1914, another suggestion of Jansson's was recorded : the approach should be broadened beyond national revolutions (i.e., independence movements) and should aim at Russia as a whole (i.e., at a social upheaval throughout the tsarist empire). For this purpose, Jansson proposed that the help of Russian Social Democrats be enlisted—that is, of those who did *not* support the war effort.⁽¹⁾

Previously, on July 12, Zilliacus had been contacted by a German officer in regard to the nearing war. This date is based on allegedly firm recollection ; the discussion may therefore have been tied to the unrest fomented in St. Petersburg. Zilliacus is mentioned on August 8 as a person who could be useful in establishing an intelligence service directed at Russia. Zilliacus, however, was no longer in proper physical condition. But he probably suggested Lenin as an available veteran of the 1905 venture. Jodko visited Gisbert von Romberg, the German minister at Berne, to whom he proposed a scheme to help finance a French revolutionary newspaper editor. Romberg, an accomplished student of politics and undercover activities, hardly missed the opportunity to question Jodko about the revolutionizing of Russia.

But while more and more people were becoming involved, German diplomats were not quite sure whether the revolutionizing was to be taken seriously. The ambassador at Constantinople, upon inquiring, was told that revolutionizing was to be executed “ruthlessly and mercilessly” (*rücksichtslos and schonungslos*). On November 27, 1914, Undersecretary of State Alfred Zimmermann argued, in a lengthy presentation, that revolutionizing was an integral part of German strategy.

Romberg had anticipated Zimmermann’s finding ; experience had taught him that the Russian revolution was both inevitable and desirable from the German viewpoint. On October 5, 1912, he informed Berlin that he was starting a systematic search for revolutionaries.

Romberg found a remarkable scout. He was Alexander Eduard Kesküla, a thirty-two year old Estonian whose father seems to have been of German origin. Kesküla was rather tall and had blue eyes and bright blond hair. Born in Dorpat, he was raised as a Lutheran. Kesküla had been the object of about a dozen search warrants ; in 1905 he had been an active revolutionary ; captured, he benefited from the Tsar’s amnesty. Through 1906 and 1907, he served as a member of the executive committee of Northern Livland as well as in the municipal

administration of Dorpat ; he was also associated with the Bolshevik combat organization, the expropriation outfit.⁽²⁾ He may have met Lenin at that time. After his arrest he succeeded in escaping. Apparently he continued his studies at the University of Zurich and (during 1912) at Leipzig ; it is possible that he first met Lenin at the latter city. In 1913 he became interested in Estonian nationalism and shifted sharply to the right. Whether he abandoned socialism altogether is uncertain, but he undoubtedly desired a Greater Estonian state, a Baltic alliance between Estonia, Finland, and Sweden, the expulsion of Russia from the Baltic Sea, and the dissolution of the tsarist empire. A facile linguist, Kesküla was well educated. He possessed a true political mind and, despite his Estonian proclivities, impressed his German interlocutors with his authentic hatred of the Russian government and his usefulness as a political agent.

Kesküla first appeared in the German legation some time before September 12. It is likely that he and Romberg discussed the various revolutionary groups as much as they could with the available facts ; at a later time the two men, as we know from handwritten notes,⁽³⁾ surveyed the situation frequently. Thus it is possible to surmise that the compatibility of their thought patterns brought them together. It was readily apparent that further information was needed. By October 1, Romberg had asked Kesküla to undertake a reconnaissance trip ; Kesküla was on his way to Sweden. A communication of October 22 indicates that Kesküla still favored national revolutions, but it is also evident that the social revolution had been discussed and that Kesküla was evaluating its feasibility.

Lenin's name appears in the German file for the first time on November 30, 1914 ; earlier references have, at least, not been found. This was an incidental remark : the Duma deputies recently arrested in Russia are of Mr. Lenin's suasion. By itself, this arrest was not too important but Kesküla suggested contemptuously that the seizure might be useful to inflate the significance of the event. He said, in essence, that this is the

type of thing with which Baron Romberg could toy. But, if insisted upon, it was possible to strengthen the Bolsheviks.

What Kesküla did not know was that on November 27, 1914, at Copenhagen, the German Minister Count Ulrich von Brockdorff-Rantzau, another specialist in Russian affairs, reported on a committee run by I.S. Sazonov that supported defeatist propaganda and urged preparations for an armed uprising. Sazonov, a Bolshevik, probably was the recipient of Lenin's productions in Switzerland. He apparently was in possession of funds, for his committee employed a secretary, Mrs. Rubinstein, who stood in favor with the Germans. Presumably this committee was the first Bolshevik group to receive German support.

On December 7, 1914—the time sequence is suggestive—an agent sent by a prominent unnamed Russian revolutionary asked Romberg a pertinent question : Should internal unrest compel the Russian government to enter into peace negotiations, would Germany betray the revolutionaries or protect them ? Romberg gave a reassuring answer.

On his return trip, Kesküla talked with the German Secretary of State ; no record has been found of the conversation. He proceeded via Switzerland to Austria to consult persons associated with the Bund. On February 24, Romberg reported that Kesküla had established contacts with revolutionaries ; a cautious pessimism, however, was still dominant.

At this time, a well-placed Swedish observer whom the Germans had sent to Russia returned, expressing great optimism. His message about the social revolution was of special importance : he had discussed the problem with Count Witte (who was to die shortly afterwards, perhaps with the aid of the Okhrana). Apparently, at this point, there also was received a note (unsigned and undated) written by a revolutionary strategist who maintained that it would be necessary to foment both the national movements and the “internal revolution.” The author advanced several proposals : contact with the Finns and Letts should be

undertaken, large-scale strikes should be financed, and Lenin should be reached.⁽⁴⁾ The contact with Lenin was soon to be established.

In the meantime, the Bolshevik conference was being held, through February and March. It was attended not only by the Okhrana but also by spies of Parvus and Kesküla, both of whom transmitted their intelligence to the Germans. But on one key problem the reports do not entirely agree : the Okhrana related that the Bolsheviks intended to unify the extreme left elements of all belligerent countries, and were anticipating a German mutiny to be organized by Liebknecht and his followers. If Lenin wished to aid Liebknecht, this news was surely welcomed by Petrograd. The German legation at Berne received no such information. The unrealistic belief that the revolution was to be instigated everywhere often appeared in Bolshevik arguments ; it represented one of the very reasons why Kesküla had been so skeptical about Lenin and his policies : for if the revolution in Germany preceded Russia's, the autocracy would emerge victorious.

The Okhrana also reported that the Bolsheviks wanted to unify the various revolutionary elements operating in Russia. Parvus had received the same information ; he noted that heretofore Lenin had been opposed to unification. But Kesküla found that Lenin had now adopted the *new* policy of working for the defeat of Russia as the lesser evil under current conditions. This policy may not have been “new”; it had been declared earlier. But Kesküla and Parvus, independently, concluded that Lenin had finally decided to pursue this policy actively.

Kesküla stated that he believed the new line would greatly impress Russia, where Lenin and his group still enjoyed a sturdy reputation, and he made an attempt to meet with Lenin. On March 25, Kesküla reported that he was going to see Lenin ; an undated note of the same period indicated he would see him “tonight.” However, on March 26, there followed a conference of female revolutionaries, largely organized by Inessa who, since Lenin had arrived at Berne, was undertaking most of the organizational work. (She had been elected Bolshevik representative

to the International Bureau of Women Workers. Her children, who had joined her in Italy in 1914, had been sent back to Russia.) Lenin was steering this conference from a café across the street and talked with the delegates after the sessions. Hence he would have been unavailable before March 29. But he saw Kesküla shortly afterwards, either by the end of March or early in April, 1915.⁽⁵⁾

Kesküla, still alive in 1961, claimed that he saw Lenin only once, late in September or early in October, 1914 ; yet he admitted that he kept no notes or diary.⁽⁶⁾ Since he left on or about October 1, he could have met Lenin only in September ; but Lenin had just arrived on September 5. It is conceivable, however, that he saw Lenin briefly to obtain addresses in Stockholm, but his reports do not indicate that he engaged in a serious discussion with him. If indeed he talked with Lenin only once (which is doubtful⁽⁷⁾), then internal evidence of the German documents makes it clear that the conversation took place in the spring of 1915, after Kesküla had already infiltrated the Bolshevik organization of Stockholm.

As Kesküla told the story in the mid-1920's when his memory still was intact, Lenin greeted Kesküla, "Well, I hear you are now working as a German agent." Kesküla replied : "If it pleases you to interpret things in this fashion, go right ahead." Lenin : "The Germans may take Riga. The Germans may take Tiflis." Kesküla : "And Ingermanland ?" Lenin : "Ingermanland ? What do you mean ? The area to the north or west of Petersburg ?" Kesküla : "Ingermanland is Petersburg itself." Lenin fell into silence and changed the subject.

This story was related by Kesküla to a friend.⁽⁸⁾ He also boasted that he was the person who drew the Germans' attention to Lenin. The story is consistent with both Lenin's and Kesküla's ways of thinking, as they can be determined from the record.⁽⁹⁾

Although the two men agreed on several points, there were a number of disagreements. Lenin clearly was reluctant to enter into firm commitments. To judge from Kesküla's reports, Lenin was still not

eager to initiate aggressive action. Apparently, too, there existed widespread feelings of defeatism and—at the same time—opposition to full concentration on the initial stages of the Russian revolution.

Years after the event, Kesküla asserted that following this meeting his communications with Lenin were transmitted through Arthur Siefeld, another Estonian Bolshevik, who was a friend of Lenin.⁽¹⁰⁾ This assertion is compatible with the evidence in the German file. Kesküla also claimed that the Germans were not aware of Siefeld's activities. This is *not so*, for Siefeld's name appears in a note taken during discussions between Romberg and Kesküla, probably in the presence of Schuberth, the political officer.⁽¹¹⁾ Whatever the arrangement, Kesküla's reports and German correspondence about his activities suggest that contacts were very close and that Lenin was not quite as naively uninformed as Kesküla tried to hint in his later years.

Kesküla maintained that he gave Siefeld money to enter on Bolshevik collection lists, in installments of a few francs. Almost certainly, this is misleading information, for, though the Germans did contribute money in this manner, a few francs would not have been of any great importance, while larger donations would have made Siefeld suspect.¹² Kesküla received substantial sums to maintain the contact with Lenin;⁽¹³⁾ there is no suggestion that he pocketed the money. If Siefeld actually "donated" only a few francs, the question arises of how Kesküla distributed the rest of the money.

Lenin did not at first receive German money. If he did not experience a sorrier financial state, it was probably because, in that period, the money which was held in escrow by the German socialists was transmitted to him. It would not be unlike Lenin to demand payment of this money which he felt belonged to the Bolsheviks as a token of earnest of the groups which wished to do business with him.

In May, Lenin met Parvus-Helphand, who was mobilizing Russian revolutionaries for the Germans. Parvus had been received by the German Secretary of State and had long discussions with Dr. Kurt

Riezler, the political warfare adviser to the German Chancellor. To these men, Parvus, the ambitious graduate of 1905, had submitted a grandiose plan for revolutionizing Russia. The scheme contained impractical features, but the impressed Germans gave Parvus one million marks and later another 500,000 marks to be pumped into Russia. [\(14\)](#)

The conversation between Lenin and Parvus (which was later confirmed by Parvus in one of his brochures) occurred when Parvus accosted Lenin in a restaurant at Berne. Lenin was there eating with Siefeld. Parvus asked Lenin to talk and the two men departed for Lenin's home. Lenin later told Siefeld that upon hearing Parvus' proposals he sent him away. Yet the fact remains that after this conversation Lenin announced plans to move to Scandinavia. [\(14a\)](#) This project did not materialize and a German confidential report of August 1915 disclosed that Parvus would support Lenin only after the tension had been smoothed out. Thus, Lenin's explanation to Siefeld is suspect. It seems rather that Parvus refused to support Lenin's personal efforts. Indeed, there is enough evidence to show that before March, 1917, Parvus financed and used Bolshevik operators without consulting Lenin. The German aid to Lenin came mostly via Kesküla.

Lenin did not wish to associate himself with Parvus, partly because Lenin considered him a competitor, and partly because he feared leaks of information. On his part, Parvus was interested primarily in obtaining access to the Bolsheviks and arranged employment for some of Lenin's men.

Hanecki, authorized by Lenin to go to Copenhagen, traveled through Paris (where he talked too much) and presumably through London. It is remarkable that, in the middle of a war, this Polish revolutionary was able to move freely in enemy countries. Though years earlier he may have had a Russian passport, [\(15\)](#) he must have been traveling on false papers, probably provided by Schober. Was Hanecki sent with the mission of reporting intelligence to Vienna ?

In Copenhagen, Hanecki became Parvus' assistant.⁽¹⁶⁾ On July 6, five million marks were budgeted by the German Foreign Office for revolutionary propaganda. Three days later, Parvus for the first time met Rantzau, and discussed the feasibility of revolutionizing Russia. The talk resumed on August 9 and resulted in the establishment by Parvus of a rather complicated enterprise. It consisted of a front research organization, ostensibly to study the social effects of war, but whose real purpose was to create a *cadre* for the penetration of Russia. Parvus did indeed recruit some outstanding intellects who were destined to leave their mark on the Russian revolution—A.G. Zurabov, V.D. Perazich, V.G. Groman (later a specialist in economic planning and victim of the purge of the Mensheviks in 1931), G.I. Chudnovsky, and M.S. Uritsky. (He almost got N.I. Bukharin, next to Lenin the outstanding Bolshevik theoretician, but Lenin, who did not want to compromise on ideological matters and may have feared Bukharin's naivete with respect to subversive operations, persuaded him to stay away from the Parvus institute.) This "intellectual" outfit was tied to a business firm which traded coal with Denmark and was designed to engage in smuggling to and from Russia.⁽¹⁷⁾ When the Germans found it difficult to secure enough rubles, Parvus determined a method of retaining earned rubles within Russia for intelligence, subversion, and insurgency. In 1915 Russia imported from Germany products worth about twenty-four million rubles ; in 1916, goods valued at 9 million rubles were imported. Included were such commodities as copper and salvarsan. There was also some trade from Scandinavia to Russia. A significant part of these transactions went through Parvus' hands, directly or indirectly ; naturally, not all of the money was left within Russia.⁽¹⁸⁾ Hanecki devoted most of his time to a smuggling operation which he did not advertise on the "affiches": he smuggled, on a fairly large scale, rubber articles, mostly contraceptives, into Russia. In addition, his firm handled drugs, syringes, thermometers, stockings, pencils and haircutters.⁽¹⁹⁾ As the Austrians reported on the arrangement, Parvus dealt with the Germans, Hanecki with the Russians ; the liaison between Hanecki and Lenin was accomplished through an unidentified "German-Jewish Swiss national."⁽²⁰⁾

The significance of Parvus' dealings with the Germans really was not that he placed them in communication with Lenin. Parvus became the adviser of the Germans on overall strategy directed towards Russia. Much of his advice was funnelled through Brockdorff-Rantzau, an advocate of revolutionizing and later Foreign Minister and Ambassador to the Soviet Union, who transmitted ideas to Parvus and periodically arranged for him to talk to the policymakers in Berlin. Parvus' schemes often evoked ridicule. He once, however, proposed the forgery of ruble bank notes. (This idea was used, *sans recherche de la paternité* by the Nazis in World War II.) The relevance of the information Parvus procured through his organization, his profound knowledge of Russian and revolutionary affairs, and the clarity of his objectives, had a great impact upon the course of the war. Of equal importance was the fact that through his "commercial" operations he built up assets in the amounts and, above all, in the currencies that were required for Germany's political warfare.

Kesküla and Parvus probably did not provide the only German contacts with Lenin. There existed a third, as yet unidentified, channel between Lenin and the German Foreign Office, probably Karl Moor. Another "friend" of Lenin, Dr. Kornblum was reported by the Austrians to have great influence and to display good judgment ; Kornblum did report on Lenin to Busso von Bismarck, the military attaché. There were Bagocki and Shklovsky, and Buchholz who ran a chemical laboratory which paid Zinovyev a salary for his skill in "political chemistry." All of these individuals dealt with the Germans for some periods of time.

Karl Radek, a friend and compatriot of Hanecki, had for years been an editor in Germany, and now worked on the *Berner Tagwacht*, a very much socialist paper. Radek had numerous connections in Germany⁽²¹⁾ and, though he did not agree with Lenin on many points, he maintained close contact with him, and, later joined him in the venture of the sealed train. The German legation often used his paper to "leak" information and to provide documentation harmful to Germany's enemies. There were also a dozen or so people who knew Lenin or Zinovyev and who

were affiliated with newspapers and universities or who simply met in cafés frequented by revolutionaries and writers. The military authorities also were involved. German military intelligence had placed well-selected agents everywhere.⁽²²⁾ Some of them were on military furlough, including Bismarck's preferred intermediary, Dr. Walter Nasse.

As suggested by General Moltke, the military had established prisoner-of-war indoctrination programs (which in 1916 led to a protest by Petrograd). There is evidence from the Okhrana that this operation was gradually following more radical and Bolshevik lines, with Malinovsky playing a significant role.⁽²³⁾ This operation influenced events far more than is generally recognized. A recent Soviet publication has shown the extent to which Lenin and Krupskaya were involved.⁽²⁴⁾ Lenin's efforts extended to fourteen camps in Germany and seven camps in Austria. He knew the number of prisoners in each camp and was well informed on camp conditions. Packages were sent, literature was distributed (mostly during 1916), and contacts were maintained, especially through Krupskaya, with forty-six prisoners and three libraries and study circles. In one instance, Lenin sent money for book purchases. A total of 119 letters were dispatched, including five to Malinovsky at the camp of Alt-Grabow.

The military, always searching for saboteurs and spies, also went bodily after the revolutionaries. Unfortunately, the military files were destroyed and details are missing. It is reported that the military wanted Lenin to go to Russia to organize a sabotage program.⁽²⁵⁾ They reiterated this request, which Lenin continued to reject as nonsense, several times through a "V-Mann" (*Vertrauensmann* or "man of confidence"). Major Bismarck, nephew of the "Iron Chancellor," concluded that Lenin was a coward. Lenin, however, did procure a sabotage expert who came from Russia to Stockholm : the old highwayman Lbov, whom Lenin had cheated. Lbov was supposed to blow up bridges over the Volga ; this time it was Lbov—not Lenin—who was dishonest.⁽²⁶⁾

The Germans occasionally checked to ascertain whether political funds were reaching their destination. Reportedly, there occurred some embezzlements of Bismarck's funds destined for the Bolsheviks ; but details are no longer traceable. German purchasing agencies held "black funds" to sustain revolutionaries. Some of these men were employed commercially ; others made money through speculation and black-marketeering.

The Austrians were busy, too, especially in Berne and Geneva. The historiographical difficulty is not in identifying "liaison agents" between the Germans and the Bolsheviks, but rather in distinguishing the busybodies and story-tellers from those who, in possession of relevant contacts, accomplished their aim. There is no doubt, however, that the "defeatist" Russian revolutionaries—especially those in Switzerland—were heavily infiltrated by German and Austrian influences ; this penetration is true of the Social Revolutionaries, the internationalist Mensheviks, as well as the Bolsheviks. Few were political prostitutes ; many were marionettes—and practically all of these alleged idealists were manipulable. However, history has been kind to them : but for a different sequence of events, they all would have earned the reputation which, in World War II, Vidkun Quisling gained for himself and the tribe of "Quislings."

1 Okhrana documents indicate that Janssen was a member of the Latvian Bolshevik sub-party and in 1907 was accused by his comrades of treason. Another accusation was that upon being arrested in 1897, Jansson informed the police of the names of fellow socialist conspirators and provided details on printing plants and distribution points during the period 1893-1897. A report on his confession written by the police on December 17, 1897, was transmitted to Burtsev on May 29, 1913. Copied from Burtsev's document by a police agent, the new copy was sent to the police at St. Petersburg. In January, 1914, the Latvians, in Jansson's presence, discussed his case and it would seem that he purged himself of the accusation (Paris to Police Department, January 20, 1914). Lenin participated in this congress. How Jansson managed to disprove documentary evidence is not apparent. Why did the police put Burtsev on Jansson's track ? This action suggests that in 1913, Jansson, working from Germany, was creating trouble inside Russia. However, there probably were two Janssens. The Jansson who was accused of treason went by the alias Braum and is now described in Soviet publications as a *founder* of the Latvian Social

Democratic party during the period 1907-1914. The loyalty proceedings against this Jansson were not mentioned in *Istoricheskii Arkhiv* (1959), No. 4, p. 38, where it is alleged that Jansson became a Bolshevik at the beginning of the war. According to Tsiavlovsky, (p. 175), Jansson, who had lived for a while in Germany under the name of Vyacheslavov, attempted to journey from Britain to attend the Kienthal conference but was unable to obtain the necessary visas. According to *Istoricheskii Arkhiv*, he died in March 1917 on the way from England to Russia, when his ship was torpedoed. Braun-Jansson's first names were Jans-Jan Eristovich. The chances are that the two Janssons were close relatives and cooperated with each other.

2 At this time, his party name was "Kivi" (stone). He used the name "Stein" in his correspondence with the Germans.

3 Most of these notes were found in the file of the German legation at Berne ; many of them are in the handwriting of Romberg.

4 This document could be a memorandum of Kesküla's conversation with Secretary Jagow. But Kesküla would not have overlooked the Estonians in favor of the Letts and there is no sign that he was pushing Lenin's "candidacy." The emphasis on Finns and Letts, however, discloses great knowledge of the Bolshevik organization. Jansson may have been the author, but the style does not quite fit. I mentioned before that some Foreign Office operators were experienced in these matters. Count Pourtalès himself was continuously consulted about the revolutionizing activities. Prof. George Katkov believes the paper was written by Parvus while still in Turkey.

5 For some details on this conference, *see* Krupskaya, pp. 301ff.

6 Michael Futrell, "Alexander Kesküla," *St. Anthony's Paper No. 12, Soviet Affairs No. 3* (London : Chatto & Windus, 1962), pp. 23-52. Kesküla died during July, 1963, in Spain.

7 There is enough evidence to indicate that by 1961 Kesküla either misremembered things or did not want to disclose the whole truth.

8 The source is a Swiss university professor who was interviewed by the writer and, earlier, by one of his assistants. The professor recounted the story even before the name of Kesküla became known.

9 In a public speech during the fall of 1914 at Geneva, Lenin said that it would be good if the Germans were to take Warsaw and Tiflis. (M. Filia, "Iz davnikh vstrech," *O Lenine, Sbornik Vospominanii*, Moscow, 1927, p. 70.) Kesküla made his point on Ingermanland and Petersburg to A.V. Neklyudov, Russian Minister to Sweden. *See* his *En Suède pendant la guerre mondiale* (Paris : Perrin, 1926), p. 295.

10 Futrell, *Northern Underground*, p. 146f. On Siefeld himself, *see ibid.*, p. 149.

11 The writer has a microfilm copy of this document.

12 Actually, any substantial donation by a penniless party member would have aroused doubts.

13 Kesküla, it says in a German document of May 8, 1916, has “maintained his extremely useful contact with Lenin” and must “therefore continue to be provided with the necessary means in the future” (Zeman, p. 17). Kesküla was then living with his pretty Swiss wife (and servants) in an elegant villa in North Stockholm where he was giving “lavish parties” (Futrell, p. 122).

14 Zeman, pp. 1-5.

14a Futrell, p. 172f. Parvus probably knew next to nothing about Kesküla, but Kesküla was informed of Parvus’s activities and sought to undercut that “uncommonly fat and paunchy gentleman” who despite “very expressive intelligent eyes” looked “like a tightly stuffed sack with a quivering belly,” as Siefeld described Parvus. Lenin’s report to Siefeld hardly was designed to disclose the content of the conversation but rather to conceal it.

15 He originated from the Russian part of Poland.

16 On Hanecki’s biography, and his attempt to postdate the time of his arrival in Scandinavia to 1916, see Futrell, p. 168f.

17 The Okhrana, already on July 22 and 30, reported that Parvus had rented an office for 1,100 crowns and had leased a private apartment in a wealthy suburb. “*Il est homme de moyens.*” He has with him a “*dame de compagnie allemande*,” Marie Schillinger, twenty-two, from Munich, and a Danish “*gouvernante*” (probably they meant she was a “*bonne*”). They stated he started a big library and the institute on war, a “*compagnie de commerce et d’exportation*,” and a publicity outfit, “*colonizes d’affiches de Copenhague*,” with Jacob Fürstenberg (Hanecki) as director. (Fürstenberg, they said, was born on March 15, 1879, in Warsaw). In addition to all this, Parvus was doing literary work. The reports indicated Parvus’ political objectives—overthrow of the Tsar and a more liberal constitution—and added it could not be proven he received money from the Germans. Otherwise, this was fairly sound reporting.

18 Parvus prided himself upon earning money by making scarce commodities available ; by the end of the war he had amassed a fortune of thirty million Swiss francs (about six million dollars).

19 Futrell, p. 183ff. Contraceptives which apparently were fabricated in Denmark from rubber which the British had allowed to pass through the blockade also were sold to Germany. The salvarsan was procured in Chicago (p. 187). Much of the trade with Russia went via the Russian Red Cross (p. 171f.). The contraceptive trade may have been initiated by a Russian importer, the Bolshevik S.M. Sachs-Gladnev, or been suggested by Eduard Fuchs, well-known socialist historian of sex mores.

20 This person is unidentified, but if Moor’s mother was Jewish, which seems likely, the description would apply to him. The Austrian document of November, 1917, was published by Helga Grebing in *Politische Studien*, Munich, 1957, p. 232ff.

21 Schub, pp. 136f. and 406.

22 On Nasse and Moor, *see* Gustav Mayer, *Erinnerungen* (Zurich : Europa Verlag, 1949). Mayer was a historian of German socialism and the biographer of Engels. He had entrée to socialists of all lines and transmitted somewhat naive information to the German Foreign Office.

23 *See also* Ruth Fischer, *Stalin und der deutsche Kommunismus* (Frankfurt : Frankfurter Hefte, no year), p. 35f.

24 *Istoricheskii Arkhiv* (1961), No. 5, pp. 101-107.

25 Interview with a former member of the German legation at Berne.

26 There was cheating but the identity of the cheater is not certain. The Germans thought they dealt with Lbov, and presumably Lenin had promised him. According to other information, he was hung. The man who wanted the Bolsheviks to pay their debt may have been Sasha Lbovets. Lenin probably did not know the difference, and Lbovets may have been the dishonest saboteur. There is a possibility that this affair was connected with the counter-intelligence activities of Lenin II (Dolin).

Lenin Realizes His Power

In March, 1915, Krupskaya's mother (who had been living with the Lenins) died ; her body was cremated. Late in May, Krupskaya was again afflicted by her glandular disease. The Lenins departed for a hotel in Soerenberg, one of the most beautiful spots in the Berne uplands. During the summer, Inessa, who in Berne was residing across the street from the Lenin's, came to visit them, often playing the piano. Krupskaya reported another series of *promenades à trois*.⁽¹⁾ But it was not all idyllic : the Bolshevik Central Committee was not invited to attend a meeting preparatory to an international conference scheduled for the fall. Lenin angrily sent Inessa to pursue the Swiss hosts of the conference.

The conference was held at Zimmerwald between September 5 and 8. The Zimmerwald movement, which emerged from this conference, was an internationalist-socialist protest against war. The Germans took a deep interest in it : the stronger the movement became, the weaker would be France and Italy—and Russia. Whether they had quietly engineered the meeting is conjectural. The Germans were worried about the defeatist attitude in Germany. Although Lenin officially preached the thesis of revolution everywhere, he played no active role, signing the moderate resolution passed by the conference. It was only subsequently that his opposition to the “soft” line was noted.⁽²⁾ Inessa's talents as interpreter were very much in demand. Edmundo Peluso, a Portuguese socialist and one of the participants who directly or indirectly reported to the Germans, was employed by the local correspondent of the United Press. But the wire services did not feature the meeting.

After the Zimmerwald conference, Lenin exhausted, returned to Soerenberg where Krupskaya was still under treatment. Inessa completed her French translation of Lenin's and Zinovyev's brochure, *Socialism and War*, and then proceeded to Paris to plan its distribution throughout France and to investigate the possibility of propagandizing

within the French army. She also helped to establish in Paris a committee for the resumption of international relations—a classical front organization which in due course was to grow into the Communist party of France—together with similar outfits, including an anti-war committee of French and Russian women. It is asserted that Lenin's brochure, as Inessa had demanded out of a sense of revolutionary justice, was widely distributed in Germany ; this claim is untrue.⁽³⁾ The Germans did not bother to smuggle this bulky theoretical treatise into Russia ; they were content at that moment to concentrate on defeatist propaganda in France.

This visit by Inessa to France brought forth documentary references on her relationship with Lenin : the Paris *préfecture de police*, in its notes to the Okhrana on April 14 and April 19, 1916, stated that “*demoiselle Sophie Popoff*,” called “Inessa,” is “*la maitresse de Lénine*.”⁽⁴⁾ According to this information Inessa remained in Paris from January 9 to April 11, when she returned to Switzerland. The purpose of her activities was to induce the soldiers to instigate revolution.⁽⁵⁾ The police reported that Inessa seemed to be on good terms with Trotsky and that she made quite an impression in a talk to the Jeunes Syndicalistes because of her knowledge of the French and Russian revolutionary movements, as well as her “*manières insidieuses*” and her facileness at speaking. However, plans for an illegal paper could not be realized and the revolutionizing of French soldiers was unsuccessful. It is interesting to note that Bolshevik attention was focused upon France rather than Russia. Perhaps this represented a *Liebesdienst* for the Germans.⁽⁶⁾

In the fall of 1915, Lenin negotiated with Kesküla, either directly or through an intermediary, seriously committing himself to a joint-action program. He was careful enough to conceal his true intentions : the socialist “minimal program”—establishment of a republic, expropriation of large estates, and initiation of an eight-hour workday—was to be the basis of the collaboration between Germany and Russia. Such goals interested the Germans only mildly. Nor did they attach much significance to the “condition” that there were to be no Russian

indemnities or territorial concessions to Germany. But the Germans were highly elated when Lenin promised autonomy to non-Russian nationalities, and offered no objection to the establishment of buffer states between Russia and Germany. He also stipulated the evacuation of Turkey by the Russian army. Thus, Lenin agreed to the disestablishment of the Russian empire and to German economic penetration of the Middle East. But most remarkable was his promise of a Russian attack on India. This constituted, in effect, a proposal to engage in an alliance between Russia and Germany against Britain.

This document is most significant.⁽⁷⁾ The only man among the Russian revolutionaries who committed himself to a secret aggression pact with imperial Germany later became the ruler of Russia. The war against India did not take place,⁽⁸⁾ but, in due course, Lenin was to redeem his other promises. In 1940 Stalin and Hitler negotiated over a similar alliance against Britain.

Kesküla, in a report dated September 30, 1915, warned that “social patriots” like Plekhanov and Axelrod were working for the defeat of Germany, and that they possessed ample means from the “government,” presumably the tsarist government. By October, German funds were flowing to Lenin. On December 21, 1915, Rantzau transmitted to Berlin Parvus’ estimate that the Russian revolution would cost twenty million rubles (40 million marks or about 10 million dollars).⁽⁹⁾

Yet it should be added that the monetary aspects of the unholy alliance were less important than the organizational support which the Germans were providing. Up to that time, Lenin had been unable to maintain adequate contact with his organization. The key Petrograd committee, for example, received from him only one letter during 1915.⁽¹⁰⁾ The contact with the Germans permitted him to remedy this situation to a considerable extent. Equally important, the Germans reprinted, in large numbers and on “cigarette paper,” Bolshevik materials, much of it on the Admiralty’s press,⁽¹¹⁾ and transported these from Germany via Denmark, Sweden, and Finland into Russia. Reproductions of Bolshevik writings

were also distributed at the front. In concealed fashion, German “cut-outs” took command of the Bolshevik organization in Sweden and from there exerted influence on the Bolsheviks in Russia. During 1913 and 1914 Lenin had analyzed systematically the list of *Pravda* subscribers and, though the war had brought about dislocations, a substantial portion of the old structure had remained intact. One of the contact points was Lenin’s sister, Anna Yelizarova, but she probably knew nothing about the German support. However, she as well as Shlyapnikov and Skvortsov were visited by one of Kesküla’s contact men, a Danish socialist by name of Alfred Kruse.⁽¹²⁾ Contacts also extended to the Volga area, specifically to Saratov and Samara, once Lenin’s residence. In addition, Parvus’ two-way smuggling operation served to transmit funds to the Bolsheviks and other radicals. From time to time, messengers traveled back and forth into Russia. Thus, by the end of 1915, a number of professionals operating under the direction, and with the logic support of, the German Foreign Office had assumed leadership of Bolshevik groups. The German revolutionizers were also infiltrating other parties.

Lenin exerted little influence. The Germans transmitted his various communications to Sweden, occasionally neglecting those with which they were not in agreement ; they also relayed news from Russia to him, carefully reading the information before delivery. Lenin told them—through “cut-outs,” no doubt—what else he knew. Hans Steinwachs, the “case officer” who supervised Kesküla for the German General Staff⁽¹³⁾ considered Lenin an important source of intelligence.

In October, 1915, Lenin returned to Berne. With his financial stability assured, he did not yet burst into any great activity. In fact, he barely worked during the remainder of the year. Krupskaya reported that they saw *The Living Corpse*, a play by Tolstoi.⁽¹⁴⁾ In December or early January of 1916, Lenin was invited to contribute a volume to the “Europe Before and After the War” series, to be published in Petrograd. He decided to write a book on imperialism—a subject which German propaganda was exploiting eagerly and which under the circumstances

was directed against Britain and France, rather than Germany and Russia. Lenin began work by January 11, and completed his book on July 2, 1916. A short while later, the Lenins left for an extended vacation.

By February 11, 1916, Lenin had moved from Berne to Zurich, the latter city's library being larger.⁽¹⁵⁾ There had again been a clash with the Mensheviks who, the Okhrana reported, wanted the 140,000 francs held in Germany.⁽¹⁶⁾ Lenin refused ; he had already obtained 100,000 francs. The Mensheviks were indignant : the International Socialist Commission required money. They proposed a compromise with Lenin receiving the largest portion. Lenin claimed he was not authorized to make any decisions but would query the Central Committee in Russia.⁽¹⁷⁾ There the matter rested. Perhaps the Mensheviks were pacified with the remaining 40,000 francs ; Lenin, however, may also have appropriated this money.

In Zurich, Lenin studied for two hours each morning and two hours each afternoon. During February and March, he studied the problems of national self-determination—another political line which the Germans were strongly advocating and the importance of which, Kesküla stated in 1961, Siefeld was told to impress upon Lenin. Strangely enough, at this time almost every one must have been happy with Vladimir. The Okhrana, on February 9, 1916, belatedly reported that the German left-socialists expected support from Russian revolutionaries. Lenin is said to have replied that the situation in Russia depended in large measure upon the revolutionary development in Germany : the Russian proletariat, he believed, would follow a revolution in Germany. In what Parvus described as a sentimental policy, Liebknecht advocated immediate peace with Russia—on the grounds that Russia had already been defeated.⁽¹⁸⁾ It was fortunate for Lenin that the Germans did not read the mail of the Russian Okhrana.

In April, Lenin participated in the conference at Kienthal, the second meeting of the Zimmerwald group. Though the debates of this

conference are now viewed by Communist historians as signifying a move to the left by international socialism, Kienthal actually had little practical significance. It is interesting that Inessa Armand, who had just returned from France and was then living in the town of Clarens, was a delegate in these congresses ; Krupskaya was ailing again and did not participate.⁽¹⁹⁾

The choice of Clarens as a home base illustrates the conditions under which the Bolsheviks were then functioning. In Clarens there existed an excellent library which was well stocked with Russian materials. The library was owned by Nikolai Rubakhin, a non-denominational socialist and pacifist, who popularized scientific books. He was the brother of Julian Reichesberg, professor in Berne who contributed to *Die Neue Zeit* and headed the committee for assistance to Russian prisoners-of-war in Germany. Both Reichesberg and Rubakhin had contacts with the Germans—as could be expected.

During this period, the Swiss police thought they detected a transitory love affair between Lenin and a German countess who, they believed, functioned as his liaison with the printer, supposedly a Count von Ostheim ; the nobleman seems to be a mythical figure. Probably the “printer” was Baron Friedrich von der Ropp, a Balt who worked for the military and later briefed General Ludendorff on Lenin. It is quite possible that Ropp was paying some of Lenin’s printing bills, but perhaps only at a later time when Ropp was receiving large sums to propagandize the cause of the minority nations in Russia. Ropp’s brother was still in Russia where the police suspected him of espionage. The report on the love affair, in all likelihood, was mistaken. The German countess presumably was Inessa Armand. But there is the implication that Inessa was aware of Lenin’s financial dealings.

In May, Lenin spent some time in Geneva, lecturing and using the library. Krupskaya fell ill again and Lenin, too, was suffering from tension. The Lenins went for a rest in the mountains. Renting for twenty-five francs a month a little house in a French-speaking canton,

they lived there from sometime in July until August 14, and then moved to a sanatorium in the German-speaking area, paying 150 francs per month for room and board. On this sum they enjoyed simple comforts. Actually, a few months earlier, sister Anna had written Lenin to inquire whether he needed money ; he rejected her offer. The vacation was marred by news of the death of Lenin's mother on August 7, near Petrograd. She was buried under a Christian cross. Lenin's last letter to the ailing woman was dated March 12, in answer to a short note of February 1 in which, in a postscript to Anna's letter, she told about Maria's teaching in Moscow and acquiring many friends.

In August, while still in the mountains, Lenin wrote a letter to G.L. Shklovsky, one of Lenin's contacts with money sources, complaining of a lack of money. There were two parties within the German Foreign Office, one advocating the revolutionizing of Russia and the other seeking a separate peace with the Tsar. By summer of 1916, the latter party, benefiting from the failure of revolutionizing attempts, had gained the upper hand. There had been received information that the Tsar had been persuaded the war would be followed by revolution, hence he wanted to continue the war to delay the catastrophe. Wilhelm, on March 11, 1916, commented in a marginal note : "Heavens, is this stupid ! And for this thousands must bleed to death."

Perhaps discreet overtures were made. Rumor had it that the Germans were willing to guarantee the Russian throne against the revolution. There seems to have been some response, especially after the visit to Russia of the French Minister of Munitions, Albert Thomas. Thomas was a socialist who genuinely wished to defeat Germany and who attempted to encourage enthusiasm for the war among Russian "defencist" socialists. It is certain, however, that he promised them aid in reform or even revolution after the war. The Tsar, it appears, was furious about Thomas' contacts, the importance of which undoubtedly was exaggerated by the Okhrana. Sazonov, the pro-Entente Foreign Minister, was dismissed and a new Minister, Boris V. Stürmer, who was generally deemed to be pro-German, was installed. His confidential

secretary, Ivan L. Manasevich-Manuilov, was soon arrested. He was an old hand at the most devious phases of intelligence and political warfare and had often been used by the Germans for the press activities inside Russia.⁽²⁰⁾ Stürmer placed him in charge of controlling Rasputin's activities.

On August 7, 1916, Wilhelm II suggested that a separate peace was the best solution, a judgment that reflected the success of a Russian military offensive under General Brusilov and that was related to the appointment of a new German military High Command.

On November 27, 1916, the widow of Grand Duke Konstantinovich,⁽²¹⁾ a German-born princess, conveyed through the Queen of Sweden a broad hint ("*politische Andeutung*") to Prince Max of Baden. The Germans were prepared to act upon this suggestion. Kesküla had noted the reversal in German policy on July 26, and had attempted to continue his operation by briefing Romberg on the deployment of the revolutionary movement in Russia, especially the Bolsheviks. He marshalled arguments against the separate peace policy. Although the handwritten notes which Romberg kept of the conversation are not very readable, it can be determined that Kesküla suggested the novel coordination of uprising with the offensive utilization of Zeppelins. In any event, Romberg did not relay this choice suggestion, probably knowing that to argue for revolutionizing would be futile at that precise moment.

Kesküla said in 1961 that Lenin quarreled with Siefeld over the national question. Romberg's notes, so far as they can be deciphered, do suggest some friction between Lenin and Kesküla. On October 14, Kesküla complained that the revolutionizing effort lacked momentum. Accommodating himself to the new German policy aiming at a separate peace strategy, Kesküla reverted to advocating the Estonian cause ; but this provoked hostility towards him on the part of the many German Balts influential in the Wilhelmstrasse.

The flow of German money to the Bolsheviks ceased. Lenin learned of this turn in his fortunes when he returned to Zurich in mid-September.⁽²²⁾ Compounding his troubles, the publication of *Imperialism* proved infeasible. There was no money at all. Lenin wrote to Shlyapnikov⁽²³⁾ that unless money were forthcoming, “we are going to croak.”⁽²⁴⁾ Lenin even considered putting the ailing Krupskaya to work ; but this was unnecessary, although for a few days she did help Felix Kohn. It is not clear how money was procured. In an emergency, Inessa may have been able to help. Possibly Lenin received assistance from Karl Moor. Yelizarov, the wealthy brother-in-law, was called upon and occasionally sent 100 or 200 rubles. To a great extent, this was “window dressing”: it is unlikely that all of the organizational money had been spent ; therefore Lenin was capable of drawing on his party salary. We know from Krupskaya that not all of the inheritance from the aunt had been spent. But the primary source of money was gone. It was politically advisable to publicize the fact that the Bolsheviks had no funds : perhaps some of the comrades could be goaded into raising money.⁽²⁵⁾ And the undesired penury could be put to good use to disprove the ugly rumors about unsavory money sources—a classical deception maneuver.

Late in 1916, Lenin resumed loose contact with the Germans, through uncertain channels.⁽²⁶⁾ The hopes for separate peace had been disappointed again, and the Berlin revolutionizers, though they did not regain control, were able to function, preserving the option for revolution as a sort of reassurance against failure with the Tsar. This group, very skeptical of the advisability of a separate peace with the tsarist system, argued that it was not sufficient merely to frighten the Romanovs with revolution, or even to overthrow the dynasty. They insisted upon the destruction of the Russian state. Lenin collected Marxist quotations on the need for the proletarian revolution to demolish the bourgeois state. These notes were later included in one of his best known books, *State and Revolution*, which was published in an incomplete form in December of 1917. At that time, the Russian legation at Berne received a report that Lenin had visited the German

legation. Probably the claim was false ; no corroboration of the denunciation exists in the Okhrana file. Nevertheless, the Russian legation complained about Lenin, apparently describing him as a deserter—perhaps an attempt to have him arrested or extradited. The Swiss police investigated and, in January, Lenin presented a written declaration denying the charge : “Since the 1905 revolution, I have been a political refugee.” Lenin moved to Zurich on January 2, 1917, and reported to the police on January 5.⁽²⁷⁾ A few days later, a Swiss police agent estimated that the Lenins had a monthly income of 200 to 250 francs.

Lenin was almost inactive. He gave his customary speech commemorating Bloody Sunday. Despite the current “tomb-like stillness,” he claimed, Europe was pregnant with change. Yet, “we of the older generation may not live to see the decisive battles of this coming revolution.” As he offered his melancholic remarks, the Russian Revolution was beginning.

1 Krupskaya, p. 307.

2 The French police, on April 11, 1916, reported that Lenin proposed a resolution on civil war. After this resolution was rejected, he went along with the majority.

3 It is, however, true that a German translation was made, and distributed at the Zimmerwald conference (Krupskaya, p. 810).

4 A third but undated police note, probably of October, 1916, repeats the phrase “*maitresse de Lénine*” and speaks of “*son arrant Lénine*.” According to this information, the purpose of Inessa’s trip was to propagandize the point of view of the left Zimmerwaldians. This was probably correct : the international defeatists were then preparing for a second conference.

5 Her daughter (*op. cit.*, p. 84) reported that Inessa was engaged in propaganda activities among Frenchmen interned in Switzerland. They were, of course, chiefly deserters.

6 Safarov, Inessa’s friend, was expelled from France, probably in January, 1916, for defeatist propaganda among the sailors at St. Nazaire.

7 Zeman, p. 6f.

8 When asked about Lenin's promise concerning India, Kesküla in 1961 explained that this must have been a garbled version of what he told the German Minister in Berne, namely that a future revolutionary regime would assist in an anti-imperialist war of liberation. This "rectification," which merely broadens the commitment, still constitutes assistance to Imperial Germany. The German Minister, incidentally, was an accurate and intelligent reporter. He hardly produced "garbles" like this, but based reports of this import on thorough discussions with the man who brought the information. Kesküla's memory, forty-one years later, is less trustworthy than a contemporary document. (Romberg would not have reported about Lenin's offer without knowing who Kesküla's intermediary was and satisfying himself, so far as possible, on his reliability.) In 1961 Kesküla also denied having offered money in 1914 to Lenin's collaborators, Alexander Shlyapnikov and Alexandra Kollontai ; yet these two rather honest revolutionaries asserted this fact when Kesküla's real role was not known to them. Kesküla struck the pose that he had been employing indirect methods of financing. But he also boasted : "Lenin was my protégé ... It was I who launched Lenin." Futrell (pp. 147 and 151), who generally gives Kesküla the benefit of the doubt, admits that the version of indirect financing is not compatible with the documentary evidence.

9 Zeman, p. 9.

10 Statement by N.I. Podvoisky, *Istoricheskii Arkhiv* (1956), No. 6, p. 112.

11 Kesküla stated that plans to have this literature printed in Stockholm did not work out (Futrell, *Northern Underground*, p. 148).

12 *Ibid.*, p. 137f.

13 Zeman, p. 13.

14 Krupskaya, p. 311.

15 There are discrepancies in these dates. According to information which the Okhrana obtained from the Swiss police, Lenin stayed at Zurich from May 22 till July 20, 1916.

16 The confusion in the figures persists. As reported above, Lenin allegedly gave the trustees 100,000 rubles or 250,000 francs. The German trustees might have paid the 110,000 francs and, if they did, both Bolsheviks and Mensheviks would have received money. Though it is possible that Lenin never paid 100,000 rubles, this residual figure of 56,000 rubles (140,000 francs) is so unusual that it suggests payments by the trustees. From vague indicators at the time of the Prague conference, there is a possibility that the Bolsheviks received 30,000 francs a year. This would account for 90,000 francs during 1912-1914. If then the Bolsheviks received 100,000 francs in 1915, there is a discrepancy of 20,000 francs which the Mensheviks (or someone like Martov) might have obtained. This would explain why there was no acrimonious quarrel about these funds before 1916. For a slightly different interpretation, see Schapiro, p. 129.

17 Paris to Police Department, Petrograd, May 29, 1916.

18 Copenhagen to Berlin, December 7, 1915. If Liebknecht had prevailed, Lenin's suggestion that the people oppressed by Germany also should be liberated could not have become effective either. (He published this thought in May in a legal Petrograd magazine.)

19 Early in 1916, Lenin wrote to his mother that Krupskaya again was suffering from Graves disease (Basedow) and though they now had a new apartment, with bath and shower, near the woods (Waldheimstrasse 66), they would have to go to the mountains.

20 Golder, *op. cit.*, p. 157.

21 The Grand Duke, the poet of the Romanov family under the pseudonym "K.R." was the protector of the Russian capital's foremost "fixer," Prince Mikhail Andronikov, who also was Rasputin's main financial agent and his contact with pro-German Jewish bankers. The Germans were supposed to be in contact with these circles all along, but the Foreign Office file refers to a conversation with a friend of Rasputin only on March 9, 1916—other data have not yet been found. On September 11, 1916, there appears a list of persons who could be used as intermediaries in separate peace negotiations. The Germans had then very exact knowledge of the situation at Petrograd. Compare also Buchanan, *op. cit.*, p. 245. According to Persky, Andronikov stayed with the Bolsheviks in 1918.

22 The Lenins lived at Zurich in Spiegelgasse, adjoining a sausage factory (which caused a "terrible stink," according to Krupskaya. The flat was opposite a "dadaist" cabaret (Futrell, p. 153).

23 Shlyapnikov was an engineer who had lived several years in France and was traveling on a French passport. He also spent some time in Britain and worked temporarily at Vickers-Armstrong. From the Spring of 1916, he spent most of his time in Petrograd but, apparently, returned several times to Scandinavia. He served via Stockholm as Lenin's main liaison with the Bolsheviks in Russia. The son of Old Believers (who did not record his birth, which occurred probably in 1885), he was dependable and clear-headed, and "had the ability, rare among Russians, to organize" (Futrell, p. 106).

24 Lenin, *Sochineniya*, 4th edition, Vol. 35, p. 187.

25 For what it is worth, a survivor from the Berne German legation personnel told me that Lenin was unsure about the outcome of the war and insured himself against a possible necessity of leaving Europe. If he had been forced to flee, he intended to go to Brazil. For this purpose he allegedly kept a money reserve.

26 By December 16, 1916, Romberg again showed interest in renewing the contact via Kesküla. There may have been small German contributions *à fonds perdu* to keep the Bolshevik organization going, but it is unlikely that significant payments were made before January or even February, 1917.

27 While at the police, Krupskaya was asked where they had been between July 20 and January 2. She replied that they had been on vacation but was unwilling to state precisely *where* they had spent their time.

Lenin : The Compulsive Revolutionary

The Throne Collapses

The assassination of Rasputin had ended the inertia. To the disgust of the Tsar, the British insisted upon internal reforms. By the end of February, 1917, the Tsar decided to discuss terms of peace with Austria. The Germans, under a Red Cross cloak, were about to send Prince Max of Baden to Stockholm.⁽¹⁾ Partly to forestall peace moves and partly to eliminate the virtually insane Tsarina and replace Nicholas II by an energetic Romanov, the military was backing a palace revolution scheduled for March or April.⁽²⁾

Early in March, socialist groups in Russia, still debating whether strikes and insurrections were premature, were warning against police provocations. Shlyapnikov, who led the Petrograd Bolsheviks, was trying to restrain action. Yet a strike flared up in the Putilov works and the old revolutionary “Cherevanin” (F.A. Lipkin), a creature of Parvus, initiated conversations about the reestablishment of a soviet. There were arrests, but labor leaders were simultaneously being released from prison. On March 12, a steering committee was formed. Within a few hours, this committee constituted the Petrograd soviet.

There were various moves by the Okhrana which suggest that an operation similar to that used in the 1905 Moscow uprising was being organized. The plan was to eradicate the revolutionary organizations, to use a pseudo-revolution to forestall the palace *coup d'état*, and ultimately to bring about a separate peace with the Central Powers. Unrest was an indispensable element of the separate peace : it was

needed to release Russia from her obligations to the allies and to ensure their financial benevolence.

On September 29, 1916, Alexander D. Protopopov, a Duma vice-president, was appointed Minister of the Interior, supposedly to improve relations between the throne and the legislature. Actually, Protopopov had attempted to negotiate with the Germans at Stockholm. The figurehead of *Volya Rossii*, a newspaper whose German attachments were notorious⁽³⁾, he was close to the Rasputin clique and the mystics at the court. The latter connections and his Stockholm discussions rather than his Duma membership are the clues that disclose the more important intentions of his appointment.

The allies knew that there existed no military reason that would justify Russia's quitting the war : both army morale and war production had been improving. There were economic difficulties, but they could be managed. The issue was political : the country lacked an efficient government able to inspire public confidence. To achieve this the Tsarina would have to be eliminated as an active political figure, a vigorous step toward constitutionalism would have to be risked, and perhaps the Tsar would have to be supplanted by a Romanov regent. The Tsar was, of course, unwilling to adopt this course : he had little choice but to try to defend existing conditions.

There were good reasons for the Tsar to fear a separate peace which might lead to uprisings and also might deliver him to the mercies of his cousin, Wilhelm II. Nevertheless, he was in a quandary, for he realized that, for compelling political reasons, the war could not be continued indefinitely. The time for negotiation had not yet arrived, but Nicholas had to determine the basis on which the Germans would be willing to negotiate. The conditions of 1916, as reported by Protopopov, were unacceptable.

There is evidence which indicates that the Tsar opposed a separate peace. Much of this evidence, however, should be considered with caution since it is derived mainly from statements made prior to these

critical days. There is no documentation to indicate whether the Tsar, during the last weeks of his regime, wanted or did not want a separate peace. But ample evidence exists that peace discussions (not negotiations, in the technical meaning of the term) had been going on since mid-1916 ; that leading personalities of the Russian government were involved in these discussions ; and that by February-March 1917, Germany and Austria, hardly without Russian encouragement, were preparing to step up these contacts.⁽⁴⁾ The Tsar, in fact, did nothing to halt these activities. On the contrary, he furthered the career of some of those who had been seeking contacts with the enemy.

To understand the separate peace problem, a number of key factors must be distinguished : first, German agents in Russia agitating for separate peace ; secondly, Russian politicians and businessmen who wanted an end to the war ;⁽⁵⁾ thirdly, more or less authorized “hints” or “feelers” from both sides—largely within the aristocratic and dynastic internationals ; fourthly, occasional exploratory talks, such as Protopopov’s conversation at Stockholm ; fifthly, projects for contacts (even *Austria* made a request on February 26, 1917, to enter into negotiations, perhaps designed to accelerate action within the government at Berlin).

Finally, it must be noted that the Germans waged psychological warfare : they leaked misleading stories about separate peace negotiations to the *Berner Tagwacht*. These rumors were spread by the world press and, despite immediate denials from Petersburg, created a great deal of suspicion, especially in London. The Russian nationalist and liberal opposition utilized these tales against the government during November, 1916 ; they were, to a degree, responsible for a more acute fear of the Tsar’s policies in London and Paris, for the assassination of Rasputin, and for the preparations for the palace coup.

The Germans took an *open* initiative during December, 1916, calling for peace negotiations between all belligerents. The Russian Foreign and War Ministries drafted a declaration intended to squelch all premature

peace talk. They stated that Russia's war aims were Constantinople and an independent Poland incorporating the Polish territories of Germany, Austria, and Russia—and that these aims had to be realized before peace could be discussed. The Tsar signed this paper. Although the declaration of December 25 was written in a tone of determination, it actually constituted a counter proposal to Germany's demand that Russia free non-Russian nationalities in Eastern Europe. The paper signified that a compromise was possible in relation to Poland, provided Germany would sacrifice Turkey for a Russo-German understanding.

But how could Russia negotiate seriously with the demanding Germans ? It was not feasible to improve Russia's bargaining position through military means. Yet, destruction of the internal opposition would strengthen the Tsar's position.

Even more pressing than these considerations was the need to forestall the impending palace coup which had been stimulated (though not caused exclusively) by a German rumor campaign of a non-existing negotiation that had led to closer relations between the “defencist” opposition and the British and French in Russia.⁽⁶⁾ The Allies now were cajoling the Tsar to reform his regime. This single fact lessened perceptibly his enthusiasm for the alliance. It was not a question of whether the Tsar was about to “betray” the allies ; after all, the Allies had fallen for a German propaganda trick and were now opposing the Tsar, though the Tsar's misgovernment was an equally potent cause in their change of attitude. In so far as Nicholas was concerned, however, the important factor was that he no longer could depend upon the loyalty of the governments in London and Paris. And he hardly was oblivious to the fact that if he had followed the advice which he was receiving from London (and to a lesser extent from Paris), the Russian government would have been seized by strongly pro-British elements. The Tsar, undoubtedly, was convinced that he needed more freedom of action against his own allies, quite irrespective of the separate peace question.

It is unlikely that the Tsar feared a socialist insurrection—the socialist leaders were trying their best to quiet their restless followers. It is more likely that because the revolutionary inclination of the populace were underrated, the fanning of a “little” unrest was considered to be without risk. Hence under the cloak of trouble, the government might move against the aristocratic, military, and bourgeois opposition preparing the palace coup. Several dates had been set for the coup, but it seems that the government had obtained intelligence which led it to expect the action by about March 24 (New Style). Preventive action, then, would have to be underway two to three weeks earlier : “P-Day” (“P” for provocation) would be some time near March 10.

Early in 1917, the Tsar’s relations with Britain worsened and the military district of Petrograd, which had been under the command of the northern front, was established as an independent command headed by the Minister of War. The purpose of this maneuver was to deprive the generals, who were believed to be implicated in the palace coup plot (including the commander of the northern front), of operational command authority in the capital. German communications intelligence noted this change and, on the basis of several additional indicators including cessation of messages transmitted abroad, deduced the probability of a strong governmental action. On February 20, 1917, Ziese, a German agent, submitted in Stockholm a rather foresighted prediction of the events that were soon to transpire. On February 26, an Englishman passing through Sweden from Petrograd decided that the situation in Russia would soon turn against British interests. [\(7\)](#)

In the meantime, rumors spread that bread was becoming scarce in Petrograd and that bread lines were forming before bakeries. Since there was no shortage of flour, the trouble could have been remedied easily ; proper actions, however, were not undertaken in time. The police, trained in the use of machine guns, placed an unknown number of these weapons on roof tops to control the main thoroughfares of the capital.

Months later, when Protopopov was indicted, it was alleged that he had asked the Tsar for 400,000 rubles to crush the revolution. The money was to be used to train the police and to buy machine guns. The Tsar approved of the measure but allocated only 50,000 rubles, to be paid on February 25. No money was required, of course, to train the police or even to purchase machine guns, since they could have been requisitioned from the army ; obviously the special funds were to be allotted to operations not yet financed by the government. In any event, a payment on February 25 would have come too late for the training of the police, as well as for the acquisition and deployment of the machine guns. For that matter, it is not known whether the 50,000 rubles were paid, although it is known that 200,000 rubles from the Tsar's secret fund were requested by *Nicholas* early in March and given to him on March 9—a most unusual transaction. The agitators, who were to become active within one or two days, were paid from unknown sources.⁽⁸⁾ According to one witness, they each received seven rubles a day, but this figure seems high.⁽⁹⁾

If the amount allocated for the provocation was 200,000 rubles and, if indeed seven rubles were paid per demonstrator, then the plan may have been to have ten thousand men demonstrate for three days—a minor demonstration—but it is likely that not every demonstrator was to be compensated for his enthusiasm. Unquestionably, the police could use funds appropriated in the usual manner in addition to the special ones. In brief, the financial evidence seems to suggest that demonstrations by twenty or thirty thousand revolutionaries were planned. This order of magnitude would fit the challenge of such a provocative operation in the midst of war. In order to serve its purpose, the unrest would have had to have been “significant”; but to retain control and to avoid encouraging the enemy, the unrest would have had to have been kept within bounds.

Provocation is a precarious operation. In 1905, Tsar Nicholas was served by a team of experts headed by Durnovo, Minister of the Interior, General Trepov, Palace Commander, and Rachkovsky, the tactical Field Commander. All of them were guided by the crafty Prime Minister,

Witte. In 1917, the Prime Minister, with only two months experience in his job, knew nothing of the “black arts.” The military District Commander not only lacked energy, but was also quite incapable. He may not have even been informed of the operations being planned. He obviously had no plan of his own, exercised no effective command, and delayed redeployments and orders to use arms until it was too late. Protopopov was the strategic commander in charge but he lacked the skill and intelligence necessary to carry this task to a successful conclusion. There exists ample evidence to prove that Protopopov was mentally unbalanced;⁽¹⁰⁾ possibly he was syphilitic.⁽¹¹⁾ Underestimating the strength of the organized revolutionaries at Petrograd, he believed that the core did not exceed 300 men ; there were probably about five to ten times that number. Protopopov’s private secretary, a certain Orlov, who was arrested after the overthrow of the Tsar, was later liberated by Lenin, and reportedly joined the Bolsheviks.⁽¹²⁾

Another person who may later have made his peace with the Bolsheviks was police General Mikhail Stepanovich Komisarov.⁽¹³⁾ (His wife was previously mentioned as Lenin’s aide.⁽¹⁴⁾) While still a captain, Komisarov had received instructions from Rachkovsky himself and had run the anti-semitic operation through which, in 1905, the Okhrana hoped to deflect the revolution.⁽¹⁵⁾ Whether or not Komisarov possessed the ability to handle this super-provocation of 1917 as its tactical field commander can never be ascertained, because on or about March 12, this master of ceremonies was unexpectedly abducted and thus neatly prevented from demonstrating his talents.⁽¹⁶⁾ Komisarov was later released unharmed ; the identity of his abductors is not known. But the action was a masterful strike in intelligence operations. It is most unlikely that any Russian organization would have shown so much dexterity. The Germans certainly were not involved either, but they themselves were sure that they detected the hand of the British in this incident.⁽¹⁷⁾

The abduction of Komisarov, however, was not the only or even the primary cause of the provocation failure. The tactics planned by the

police were inept ; the intended employment of machine guns from predetermined fixed positions was especially faulty. The Petrograd garrison of 160,000 men was sufficiently strong numerically, but the soldiers were mostly those beyond the age of active duty or those convalescing from former wounds. Both groups of soldiers were naturally strongly against war and therefore oppositional. The better caliber of soldiers consisted mostly of “minority nationalities,” especially Ukrainians and White Russians ; there also were Letts, Lithuanians, Finns, and Estonians. These troops had become strongly anti-Tsar.⁽¹⁸⁾ The morale situation among the military was aggravated by poor logistics which resulted in a scarcity of warm food and drinks and the overuse of troops to beyond the fatigue point. The men who were used most extensively and broke first were in undisciplined reserve units. The Cossack units consisted largely of untrained recruits who were obviously not suited for action against civilians. The officers assigned to the Petrograd garrison were sick in large numbers, wounded, or desk types unaccustomed to leading troops and imposing discipline. In addition, many of the reserve officers sympathized with the revolution.

The tsarist government had for years failed to provide indoctrination courses for its troops. It did not even practice civilian “public relations.” During 1916 five million rubles had been allocated for this purpose but by March, 1917, none of this sum had been spent.

The situation got out of hand when the management of the Putilov armament works, the largest concern in Russia and in Petrograd, took advantage of a desultory strike (on March 7) to institute a complete lock-out of its 30,000 workers. This created a strong emotional reaction. A.A. Putilov was in favor of Nicholas’ elimination, and he may have initiated the lock-out to aggravate the situation.

Moreover, March 8 was the “Day of the Female Worker.” For this date, demonstrations (mostly of women) had been planned. Except for the Okhrana agents among them, such as V.Y. Shurkanov, the revolutionary

organizers still insisted on a relatively peaceful demonstration. But the Putilov workers, being idle, joined the women ; the police, whose orders were to be accommodating, became entirely passive in the face of female wrath. Such police behavior stimulated many would-be demonstrators. As the news spread that the government seemed to have lost control of the situation, the columns grew longer and more and more demonstrators appeared in the streets.

Only at this point did the revolutionary organizations take action. The Bolsheviks were particularly slow ; they are, to this day, in their historical writings attempting to predate their revolutionary actions. Yet a small Social Democratic splinter unit, composed chiefly of intellectuals (the so-called *Mezhrayontsi* or inter-burrough organization), was the first revolutionary group which, through posters and appeals, sprang into action and advanced the revolution. This group was under the leadership of I.K. Yurenyev and was associated with Trotsky, who was then in New York.⁽¹⁹⁾ In addition, local Bolshevik cell and factory leaders, notably V.N. Kayurov⁽²⁰⁾ and Chugurin, in defiance of such party hierarchs as Shlyapnikov, called out their troops. Due to the initiative of such men, the demonstrators, who had been stopped at the Neva bridges, were led across the ice into the central sectors of town ; the crossing, which could have been blocked easily, was unopposed. Mensheviks and Social Revolutionaries joined the soldiers, inciting them to mutiny ; this effort was seconded by Bolshevik and other agitators who were serving under the colors. The garrison which was ordered to support the now powerless police refused to shoot. One regiment after another mutinied, placing itself under the orders of the Duma which had suddenly become a revolutionary command center.

On March 10 the Tsar wired Petrograd, "I order to liquidate ... by tomorrow the unrest in the capital."⁽²¹⁾ (This command sounds almost like Xerxes ordering the Hellespont to be whipped.) But if the telegram is read simply as a counterorder to the stage directors of the provocation, it loses its tone of imbecility ; Nicholas II should not be considered a comic opera prince.

The order was sent too late. The leading generals told the Tsar that the moment of abdication had arrived. Tsarism was at its end.⁽²²⁾ The aims of the palace revolution had been achieved. But in the process, the political earthquake and the social upheaval which the plotters had wanted to avoid by a neat surgical operation had taken place after all. The revolutionary Mephistopheles held the promise of everything to everybody—happiness, pleasure, whatever one could dream of or desire. The Russian people, similar to Faust, answered eagerly, “*Eh bien, pauvre démon, fais-moi voir tes merveilles.*”⁽²³⁾

Kesküla, the devil’s disciple, immediately wrote for *Die Neue Zeit* an article calling for the completion of the revolution. Nicholas Murray Butler, a leading American intellectual, commented that Jean-Jacques Rousseau again had been proven the greatest political force in the world. Butler described the Russian revolution as the “product of philosophy and letters”⁽²⁴⁾ and wished it godspeed. Such are the delusions of some intellectuals.

1 The Tsarina’s brother, Grand Duke Ludwig of Hesse, reportedly went to Russia incognito late in 1916. The Hesse family has continued to deny this story and it would seem foolish for the Grand Duke to travel, in the midst of war, to enemy Russia. A trip to Finland would have been more easily arranged but would have been pointless if personal contact was desired. Communications between brother and sister could be easily maintained through Sweden.

2 Communist writers (e.g., Trotsky) denied that a palace revolution was in the making. There is, however, ample confirmation, including the recent autobiography by General Bonch-Bruyevich (*op. cit.*, pp. 124ff) who also asserts that the British and French Ambassadors knew about the plot. According to many uncorroborated reports in the German file, the British desired the *coup d’état* to ensure an effective Russian contribution to the war and block the separate peace maneuver. Rightly or wrongly, the British seem to have been convinced that the separate peace between Russian and Germany had become unavoidable unless Nicholas II were eliminated.

3 Golder, *op. cit.*, p. 173.

4 Much of the evidence from the Russian side was collected by S.P. Melgunov, *Legenda o separatnom mirye* (Paris : no publisher, 1957). This work was published after his death before the author could finalize his conclusions. Melgunov showed that there was no formal

negotiation and he argued that the Tsar did not really know or approve of these transactions. He failed to understand the technical difficulty of such an undertaking, and also underrated the momentum of the effort. He did not have pertinent information from the German and Austrian files. By arguing that only Russian personalities of secondary importance were involved, he misinterpreted the role of the Prime Minister, the Minister of the Interior and other high-ranking personalities, and also misconstrued the function of intermediaries who by necessity must be able to operate anonymously.

5 One such group centered around the financier Manus, many of whose interests were devoted to the transport industry. Manus had connections with several banking firms influenced by German capital. He supposedly distributed German secret funds in Russia. The validity of this theory appears doubtful, since Manus was primarily attracted by the cause of money-making. However, once a week he had Rasputin for dinner, and these regular dinners always were attended by two or three important court officers from the Tsarina's immediate entourage. The classified information revealed during these evenings presumably was passed on, and many of the "counsels" given to the Tsarina through Rasputin (notably with respect to incessant changes of Cabinet Ministers) presumably originated during these Wednesday soirées. Banker D.L. Rubinstein, who stood to Rasputin in a relationship similar as did Manus, specialized in acquiring shares of requisitioned German firms and helped the Tsarina to transfer money to Germany; he was more obviously interested than Manus in politics, for he acquired shares of newspaper corporations. However, Manus associated with a former secretary of Witte, a State Councillor named Josif Y. Kolyshko who, after leaving government service, had become a political commentator. Several times, during the 1915-1917 period Kolyshko negotiated with the Germans gaining their implicit trust. It is likely that Manus passed much of his intelligence through Kolyshko. The German industrialist Hugo Stinnes, in agreement with the Wilhelmstrasse, gave Kolyshko two million rubles to establish or buy a newspaper (in August, 1916). Kolyshko broke with Stinnes and after the fall of the Tsar was pressed by the Wilhelmstrasse into the service of the second revolution. Parvus advised the Germans that Kolyshko should be taken seriously—apparently the two men met. Gorky's *Novaya Zhizn*, which started publication in May, 1917, was financed in part by the Stinnes money (transferred through Kolyshko) who also had acquired the *Petrogradskii Kuryer*. Kolyshko apparently was the main disbursing agent for the Bolshevik unrest in April and May, later boasting that he had "worked hard" to evict from the provisional government P.N. Milyukov as Foreign Minister and A.I. Guchkov as War Minister. Kolyshko was arrested by the end of May, released on bail in September, and then escaped abroad. This story demonstrates the continuity and interrelationships of the German effort but it does not indicate whether people like Manus were themselves agents or used by agents. It does indicate the enormous impact a well-placed agent can have and retain even while circumstances are changing.

6 For a summary of the various *coup d'état* projects, see Michael Smilg-Benario, *Der Zusammenbruch der Zarennionarchie* (Wien : Amalthea, 1928), pp. 89-108.

7 The unnamed Englishman's remarks were reported to German authorities.

8 Gurko, *op. cit.*, p. 272.

9 According to W.K. Korostowetz, the patriotic demonstrators who, late in July, 1914, were called into the streets to counter the impression created by the “revolutionary” demonstrators, were paid three rubles. (*Lenin im Hause der Väter* (Berlin Kulturpolitik, 1928), p. 146.) Since apparently the Germans paid only one and one-half rubles, this must have been the start of the inflation in the business of revolution.

10 P.E. Shchepolev (ed), *Padeniye tsarskogo rezhima*, vol. 1, Leningrad, 1924, pp. XXIX, 111-181 ; Melgunov, pp. 229, 264.

11 The Tsar wrote about this affliction of his minister to the Tsarina on November 10, 1916.

12 Persky, *op. cit.*, p. 273.

13 *Ibid.*, p. 272.

14 See page 100.

15 A.A. Lopukhin, *Otryvki iz vospominanii* (Moscow, 1923), p. 88.

16 Louis de Trywdar-Burzynski, *Le Crépuscule d’une autorité et quelques crises en Allemagne*, (*Extraits de Souvenirs*) (Florence : Rossi, 1926), p. 151f.

17 The Germans adduced many data to show the similarity of the February revolution with British activities directed in 1908 and 1909 against the Sultan of Turkey.

18 Kesküla reported that the Estonian infantry men were foremost among those who refused to obey orders and put down mass unrest.

19 I. Yurenyev “ ‘ Mezhrayonka, (1911-1917),’ “ *Proletarskaya Revolyutsiya* (1924), Nos. 1 and 2. The *mezhrayonka* may have been in touch through Larina with the Parvus organization. There is no good evidence where the money went, which Parvus and Hanecki earned to finance the revolution. At a minimum, several tens of thousands of rubles, and perhaps more than 100,000 rubles must have been available, granting that profits were far smaller than turn-over and that profits had to be split. (For the basis of this estimate, see Futrell, p. 188.) The Petrograd Bolshevik organization remained without substantial funds. There is hardly any doubt that Parvus and Hanecki pumped substantial amounts of money into the *Mezhrayonka*. Prof. George Katkov, with whom the writer discussed this problem, also is inclined to accept this interpretation.

20 *Proletarskaya Revolyutsiya* (1923), No. 13, *Istoricheskii Arkhiv* (1956), No. 5, p. 148.

21 Smilg-Benario, p. 140.

22 Contrary to the superficial interpretation of many historians to the effect that the February revolution was “spontaneous,” Lenin, far more correctly, ascribed it to the collusion of three forces : English-French finance capital, “the entire bourgeoisie and the landowning-capitalist

class in Russia (and the higher officers in the army),” and the revolutionary proletariat, including the revolutionary soldiers. (*Werke*, vol. 36, 410f.)

23 Goethe, as translated by Gérard de Nerval.

24 *New York Times*, April 24, 1917.

The Sealed Car

In Zurich, Lenin knew nothing about these momentous changes. The morning of March 15, as he was leaving for the library and Krupskaya had finished washing the breakfast dishes, a friend ran into their apartment and reported that the revolution had begun. Lenin and Krupskaya proceeded to read the newspapers which were hung up in display boxes. On March 16 the Tsar's abdication was confirmed.

But Lenin belittled the event : the bourgeoisie had legalized the political power that it already possessed *de facto*. He did not expect that a labor party would be legalized. If it were, the unification of the Bolsheviks and the Mensheviks would be unavoidable !

The news had been electrifying to the revolutionaries. Some Bolsheviks living in Sweden had started for home already. Lenin's initial response was a strengthening of his belief that the Bolsheviks would have to continue existence as an independent party. He did not consider returning to Russia. Lenin wrote to one of the Bolshevik Duma deputies who had been arrested in 1914 that, upon his release, he was to go to Scandinavia in order to organize Lenin's liaison with Russia. On March 17 Lenin proposed the establishment of a communication point in Norway and called for the organization of revolutionary cells within the army. This demand could not but curry favor with the Germans, who were reading Lenin's mail. On March 18 Lenin calmly traveled to western Switzerland, met Inessa, and gave his customary talk on the Paris Commune.

Lenin assumed that "it will not be possible to get away early from this damned Switzerland."⁽¹⁾ Yet German diplomats already were planning the return of Lenin to Russia. A few weeks later, the German Chancellor, Bethmann-Hollweg, reported to the Emperor that "immediately" upon learning of the Russian revolution—he received this news during the afternoon of March 14—he instructed the German

Minister to Switzerland to offer the Russian exiles passage through Germany. It is not clear which channels were to be used ; the Germans had a large number of contacts. These included Dr. Kornblum who participated in the Bolshevik conference of 1915, and who at that time apparently was in contact with von Bismarck ; Buchholz, whom Lenin had known from Samara and Berlin ; Bagocki, who had been involved at Cracow and who soon became the executive secretary of a committee working for the return of the revolutionaries from Switzerland to Russia ; Shklovsky, who during 1916 was one of the persons who transmitted money to Lenin. Also of importance in such work were the correspondent of the *Frankfurter Zeitung*, Dr. Deinhard ; the German left-socialist Paul Levi ; the promotor of the Youth International and Lenin's young German adherent, Willi Muenzenberg ; the Polish socialist and former German journalist, Karl Radek ; a Swiss socialist, Hermann von Boetticher ; finally, the several contacts which the military attaché had among the international Mensheviks ; and, of course, Kesküla and Moor.

It was indeed simple to plant the idea. Already in 1915 Parvus had dispatched Russian revolutionaries through Germany. The German military wanted Lenin to organize sabotage campaigns. On December 29, 1916, Okhrana agent "Gretchen" reported that Lenin was still in Switzerland and would not leave via Germany : even if he were able to obtain the visa he would not use it—to avoid giving for a second time the impression of collusion with the Central Powers. It would be interesting to know the background of this perplexing "premature" document.

Financial support to Lenin was probably resumed before the overthrow of the Tsar : the Germans knew through their intelligence service that major changes were impending. On February 17, Lenin wrote that numbers three and four of *Sbornik Sotsialdemokrata* (a collection of theoretical articles) were ready, but "how sad—we have no money."⁽²⁾ During that period, surviving witnesses have reported, Zinovyev often paid Lenin's restaurant bill. On March 10, however, the German

Minister dispatched to Berlin the two previous *Sbornik* issues (which Kesküla secured and which the experts in the Foreign Office never read) and added, “I hear that publication of numbers three and four is assured.” On March 17 money was available and was offered to the comrades in Scandinavia.

The Petrograd bureau of the Central Committee sent a telegram through Norway on March 18 which Lenin presumably received on March 19. It stated : “Ulyanov must come immediately.” The revolution had been underway for more than a week and the Tsar had abdicated three days earlier, but only *now* did the Bolsheviks remember their leader who had not yet bestirred himself. He had merely tried to establish contact through Alexandra Kollontai, a woman comrade in Stockholm, but she had returned to Russia without waiting for the leader’s advice.

Despite this invitation, and another to go at least to Finland, Lenin took no serious action. Unlike other revolutionaries he did not go to the British and French consulates. He asked Safarov to lend him his passport so that he could travel through France under a false name. Yet Safarov had been disseminating defeatist propaganda to the French army. With his passport Lenin would have met with more trouble with the French authorities than if he had been traveling under his own name ; preparations for the trip were discontinued.

But presently, Lenin’s old enemy, Martov, suggested at a meeting at Geneva with Bolsheviks on March 19, that the revolutionaries be permitted to pass through Germany in exchange for Austrian and German prisoners of war.⁽³⁾ This proposal was contingent upon approval by the Petrograd government.

Martov made the unfounded assumption that France and Britain would deny passage. It was not unreasonable to expect difficulties, but the proper course of action would have been to request instructions and diplomatic and consular assistance from Petrograd. Yet Lenin and his temporary allies of Menshevik loyalty did not even consider applying

for passage through allied territory, despite the fact that many Russian émigrés were returning home via the West, usually in allied ships.

The Bolsheviks and international Mensheviks, as well as the left Social Revolutionaries, the Jewish Bund, Polish socialists, and other defeatist groups had had dealings with the Central Powers.⁽⁴⁾ The key men in these groups, uncertain as to what extent their secret contacts had been detected, did not wish to risk indictment for espionage. The German legation believed, however, that the revolutionaries feared the sea voyage with its peril of submarine attack.

The revolutionaries resolved to contact Berlin through the Swiss government and requested that the Swiss socialist deputy, Robert Grimm, act as negotiator in their behalf. Grimm was leading the Zimmerwald movement. The revolutionaries probably suspected that he maintained close contacts with the German legation. In Lenin's judgment (expressed in January, 1917), Grimm had gone over to the "social patriots" and was destroying the movement;⁽⁵⁾ Grimm was guilty of "complete treason." Yet he was now chosen to conceal the true nature of the transaction—or selected with the expectation that he would do nothing.

On March 20, Lenin resumed a rather desultory literary effort. On March 21 Parvus saw in Copenhagen Brockdorff-Rantzau to whom he proposed mobilization of the more radical socialists against the new Russian government which was democratic, pro-Entente, and "defeatist." The next day Parvus transmitted to Adolf Müller, the Bavarian socialist who had excellent connections with the Berlin government, a program which was to be accomplished by their Russian "party friends." It called for the arming of workers, indictment of the Tsar, proclamation of a republic, confiscation of crown lands, convocation of a constituent assembly, partition of large land holdings, eight-hour workdays, and peace. Parvus' prodding forced Rantzau to formulate a new strategy of revolution which was to replace conventional warfare. Parvus was sent to explain the concept to the

German Chancellor shortly after March 21. (Subsequently, Rantzau demanded that Parvus be received by the unsympathetic Secretary of State.) Crucial was the return of Lenin to Russia. Berlin approved and Parvus' agents (notably Hanecki, who was then at Christiana) undertook the task of persuading Lenin. A German apparatus in Scandinavia also accelerated its operations.

On either March 22 or 23, the Swiss Foreign Minister informed the German legation that "outstanding Russian revolutionaries desire to return to Russia via Germany since they are afraid to go through France on account of the submarine risk."⁶ This was the first *official* communication.

Lenin knew that the revolutionaries in Denmark—Parvus and Hanecki—had established a close rapport with the Germans and were in possession of substantial financial resources. On March 24 he wrote to Hanecki.⁷ There were earlier communications, perhaps through intermediaries, and it seems that this message to Hanecki was preceded by a receipt of money, but this is the earliest letter published. With his customary caution, Lenin spoke mainly of better communications with Pravda, a problem of secondary importance. But in Aesopian language he informed Hanecki that he was willing to cooperate : he pointedly ended his letter by employing a slogan which Parvus had just expounded to the Germans : "Long live the proletarian militia which is preparing peace and socialism."⁸

Opposition still existed in Berlin. But on March 24 Lenin acquired a new "ally" when the German Emperor let it be known that he intended to support the socialists against the new Russian government, and the High Command informed the Foreign Office⁹ that they had no objections to the passage of Russian revolutionaries through Germany.

To this point, Lenin's interest in returning to Russia had been weak. Because many revolutionaries were on their way home and virtually all exiles were talking about their return, Lenin, who was supposed to be an active revolutionary leader, was forced to go through some motions, but

he was play-acting. On March 25, however, he informed his comrades in Copenhagen that he was unhappy about the delay. Still, he found time for doing what he liked best—to attack other socialists : as though it were a matter of the greatest urgency, he polemically argued against Gorky.

On March 27 Parvus' emissary, who also was an agent of the German General Staff,⁽¹⁰⁾ visited Lenin and suggested a solution. Passage through Germany would pose no difficulties ; the real task was to smuggle Lenin and Zinovyev through Denmark and Sweden into Russia. The German Bolshevik organization in Scandinavia had been smuggling literature and merchandise into Russia for years. Hence it undoubtedly was able to transport Lenin into the country without danger. This project, it seems, had been suggested earlier and apparently Lenin had sent passport photos of himself and Zinovyev. Now the false Swedish passports were being delivered by Parvus' agent but Lenin was not willing to take the "risk." The risk was merely that the Swedish border officials might have noticed that these alleged citizens did not speak Swedish and they might not have believed the cover story that the bearers of these authentic-looking passports were deaf-mutes. The risk actually involved was only detention for a few hours or days.⁽¹¹⁾

Lenin telegraphed Hanecki that he could not agree to the plan. Instead, Lenin wanted an entire Swiss railway carriage to transport him to Copenhagen, or an agreement about the exchange of Russian refugees for interned Germans. The exchange agreement would have required lengthy negotiations between Berlin and Petrograd through a neutral power and would have entailed inordinate delays. Hanecki, who was then in Stockholm, could do little to obtain a Swiss railroad carriage. Lenin probably knew that the Swiss would not agree to such a transaction in order to preserve their neutrality. In sum, Lenin was procrastinating.

Meanwhile, in Copenhagen on March 28, 1917, Sazonov talked to Siegfried Goldberg, who was an agent of Matthias Erzberger and, as a German Reichstag member of the Catholic Center party who was amply supplied with funds, guided many psychological and political warfare campaigns outside the Foreign Office structure. Sazonov and Goldberg discussed methods of achieving peace. Sazonov, who was about to leave for Russia, told Goldberg that Lenin was the *real* revolutionary leader and promised to contact him. It is believed that Erzberger then applied pressure on the Wilhelmstrasse to get Lenin underway.

On March 29 Lenin again changed his mind. He wrote to Hanecki asking him to spare no costs and go to Petrograd, adding that the first bourgeois government to be eliminated was that of Russia. An agent of the German military attaché assisted at a Bolshevik meeting and reported that Lenin now was willing to pass through Germany *without* the permission of the Russian government ; Lenin's comrades remained entirely unconvinced.

The Germans discussed the technicalities of the proposed trip. The military, foolishly fearing that the Russians might agitate while passing through Germany, suggested that the revolutionaries travel under escort in a collective transport. This notion was transmitted to the revolutionaries ; whether it was a feedback from Lenin's suggestion to Hanecki is difficult to determine. On March 30 an agent of the General Staff, in a report to his superiors, suggested that the trip be authorized without delay.

Alleging that England would not allow him to pass through, Lenin wanted the soviet to arrange an exchange with interned Germans, a time-consuming project. However, on March 30, Lenin again desired approval from Petrograd.⁽¹²⁾ On the same day, the German legation at Berne received an agent's report which stated that Lenin had delivered a speech lasting two-and-a-half hours in which he called for the liberation of colonies and oppressed nations, opposition against bourgeois

governments, notably in Russia, and revolutionary war. This type of language conformed well with the supposed needs of German strategists.

On March 31 Lenin and Zinovyev wrote to Martov and Natanson (who then used the name of “Bobrov”). They objected to the hesitancy shown by the other revolutionary groups ; they affirmed that they wished to proceed. It was the first forceful insistence on departure. It also represented one time when Lenin did not want a split, for he needed support for purposes of self-justification. Significantly, the letter added that Grimm’s proposal—to pass through Germany—was acceptable, but Grimm had insisted that Petrograd be contacted and permission secured. Lenin, Zinovyev, and Krupskaya immediately wired Grimm from Zurich notifying him that they would assume no responsibility for further postponement : “We absolutely cannot agree to further delay . . . Send us decision tomorrow.”⁽¹³⁾ They added that they numbered “over ten passengers” and would be traveling “alone,” that is, without waiting for the revolutionaries from other parties.

But the genuineness of the hurry seems doubtful. On the previous day Grimm had informed the revolutionaries that he could not continue to negotiate. Yet, after receiving the telegram, he spoke again with the Swiss Foreign Minister. This time he advised against contacts with Petrograd. The Minister told Grimm to stay out of the affair and informed the German legation that the revolutionaries would make contact the following day.⁽¹⁴⁾ Grimm telephoned (it is not known to whom) to say that his mission was terminated ; he proposed finding another intermediary. In the meantime, the legation waited. It was as though Lenin became active at the moment he lacked an intermediary. Yet two weeks after the Tsar’s abdication it was obvious that no serious risk was involved in a return to Russia.

On April 1 the Wilhelmstrasse requested five million marks for political use within Russia—a major decision had been made.

On April 2 the Mensheviks and Social Revolutionaries stated that without the approval of the Petrograd government, passage through

Germany would be a mistake ; they would not move before it was clear that proper authorization was unattainable.

If Lenin had been anticipating such a declaration in the hope that it would provide an excuse for his own inaction, he had miscalculated. On the morning of April 2, the German Minister in Berne received a peremptory communication from Berlin ordering him to expedite the transport of Russian revolutionaries through Germany :⁽¹⁵⁾ clearly Berlin thought that the deepening of the Russian Revolution should no longer be delayed. The means were available but the actors were still wanting.

Romberg, seeking an excuse to explain the loss of tempo, answered that some émigrés were awaiting instructions from Russia and “others still seem uncertain as to whether or not they wish to avail themselves of our offer”⁽¹⁶⁾ (which had not yet been made officially). He recommended waiting, but sprung into action and contacted Lenin through Paul Levi. Within a few hours, Lenin liquidated his household furnishings and proceeded to Bern.

In the evening of the same day, Anna (Lenin’s sister in Petrograd) received a telegram from her brother informing her that he would arrive on the evening of April 11.⁽¹⁷⁾ The telegram must have been dispatched on the morning of April 2, almost immediately after the German Minister had been told by Berlin that Lenin should depart without delay. At that time the Bolsheviks had not even initiated formal negotiations with the Germans. The telegram has been available for years : if interpreted through the background of the German files, it proves that, far from acting like a tiger in a cage, Lenin started to move only after the Germans forced him.

Fritz Platten, a Swiss socialist who had participated in the Russian revolution of 1905 and who was married to a Russian, was the new intermediary recommended by Grimm. Lenin had described Platten as a “good for nothing” in February, 1917.¹⁸ Now he found him acceptable, partly because his views were similar to Lenin’s and partly because he

was a political weakling. Platten may not have been a German agent, but he was a corrupt individual seeking personal gain and notoriety.¹⁹

On April 3, Lenin conferred with Platten who then went to the German legation for a preliminary contact. Platten proposed to the Germans the establishment of an intelligence service in Stockholm. His suggestion was not accepted, although the Germans later used him as an occasional communications channel.²⁰

In the evening of April 3 Lenin wrote to the Bolshevik section in Zurich that he was in possession of “a fund of over 1,000 francs to cover the cost of the journey”; he enclosed 100 francs to be loaned to an unnamed comrade.²¹ On April 4 Platten held a long conference with the German Minister. On April 5 an “agreement” was worked out ; it was approved by Berlin on April 7. Also on April 5, the German Foreign Office had reported agreement among the General Staff and their promise that an “understanding officer” would accompany the train. But there were further delays. The Germans attempted to persuade a number of the unwilling revolutionaries to accompany Lenin ; they also negotiated the transit through Sweden.

Lenin, on April 7, asked a few international socialists to compose a statement “approving” of the trip ; this act, according to Russian law, constituted high treason. He also requested the approval of the well-known writer Romain Rolland but failed to gain it.²² Finally on Monday, April 9, the revolutionaries and their friends consumed a farewell luncheon at the Zähringer Hof. Lenin read the draft of a letter to the Swiss workers²³ saying that while “the Russian proletariat has the great honor to commence a series of revolutions engendered by the imperialist war . . . socialism cannot win immediately” in Russia, “one of the most backward countries of Europe.” The task was to give impetus to the bourgeois-democratic revolution and to make a “small step” toward the socialist revolution. Lenin concluded : “The German proletariat is the best and most reliable ally of the proletarian revolution in Russia and of the world revolution.”

The travelers left the restaurant at 2:30 P.M. In the station, there were shouts and unrest. Lenin, with Platten and Zinovyev, walked solemnly to the train through a *cortège*.²⁴ Shortly after boarding, he bodily evicted Oscar Blum, a socialist from Riga, whom he suspected of being an Okhrana agent. Thereupon the train with thirty-two revolutionaries and fifteen minutes delay, left Zurich at 15:10 o'clock.²⁵

The Germans had expected sixty travelers. According to Communist count there were nineteen Bolsheviks. Actually, there were not more than about a dozen true Bolsheviks, almost all of them members of Lenin's "enlarged" family : Krupskaya, Inessa Armand (whom an Okhrana report of November 16, 1916, described as Lenin's "right hand"), her former and perhaps current boyfriend, Georg Safarov, and his brother, Zinovyev, with his wife and child, and Olga Ravich, a friend of Krupskaya.²⁶ There were two other reasonably prominent Bolsheviks present : G.Y. Sokolnikov and the Caucasian, Mikha C. Tskhakaya,²⁷ Chairman of the Third Congress and later President of the Central Executive Committee of Transcaucasus and finally of Georgia. There were also two Russian workers who had joined the Bolsheviks in Zurich, a Bolshevik of the criminal type and one other revolutionary, "A. Linde," who either was a German agent or the brother of one (or both). The total is thus thirteen ; Radek may be added to the list of Bolsheviks,²⁸ but Radek's relations with Lenin had not been close. The rest of the group consisted of persons who then and now remain totally unknown. Some, to judge from the signatures, were quite old. It is apparent that the supposed number of the "revolutionaries" was padded to impress the Germans.

The trip was uneventful. Krupskaya said that the "cook served up good square meals to which our emigrant fraternity was hardly accustomed."²⁹ Lenin, who disliked the odor of smoke, severely rationed cigarette smoking. The train, incidentally, was not "sealed"; nor was it a box car, but rather a wagon. The revolutionaries, however, were separated from the other passengers.

The train was given such high traffic priority that it delayed the train of the German Crown Prince for two hours.³⁰ Yet a connection was missed at Frankfurt and a few hours delay resulted. It was reported that a British spy was evicted from the train, but this probably occurred without loss of time, either after crossing the border or, according to interview information, at Celle. The train was scheduled to arrive at the Baltic port of Sassnitz on April 11 at 1:00 P.M.³¹ Due to the delay the train was not expected to connect with the ferry to Sweden and plans were made to quarter the revolutionaries overnight in Sassnitz. However, the train remained overnight *in Berlin*, departing on April 12 at 7:15 A.M. It arrived at Sassnitz at 3:15 P.m.—a delay of twenty-six hours. Apparently the train stood for at least twelve hours and possibly as many as twenty hours in Berlin. Strangely enough, this fact is seldom noted. Reports of other passengers state that the train stood for a “few hours” on a Berlin siding. The official report of the escort officer, Cavalry Captain von der Planitz, was delivered to army intelligence.³² If there existed a copy, it has vanished from the files of the Foreign Office.

Time and again, the German documents refer to the need not to compromise the passengers. Still, there are vague hints about chance conversations in Frankfurt. It is said that in Berlin, Platten was not allowed to leave the platform “without permission”—implying that he did leave, even if only after obtaining approval. Krupskaya reported that just before they came to Berlin, “several German Social Democrats” entered a special compartment but “none of us spoke to them.”⁽³³⁾ Zinovyev told Fedor Raskolnikov that Scheidemann, the leading German Social Democrat, tried to see Lenin on the trip. Platten disclosed that three representatives of the German government accompanied the train and that Jansson brought greetings from the trade unions but added that Lenin did not meet Chancellor Bethmann-Hollweg or Scheidemann.⁽³⁴⁾

The train would not have been delayed in Berlin without compelling reason. The rumors that Lenin met Bethmann-Hollweg or even Scheidemann seem far-fetched indeed. It is conceivable that Lenin,

alleging upon disembarking from the platform that he was Platten, did confer with German officials. If so, it is possible that he saw Kurt Riezler, Bethmann's assistant for political warfare. Riezler later told a friend that he had sent an emissary to the train but that the talk took place only on the ferry between Germany and Sweden.

The Germans, pretending to act upon a suggestion by *Swiss* trade unions, had insisted on Jansson joining the transport. When Berlin accepted Platten's "conditions" concerning the modalities of the trip, they added that Jansson would have to be among the passengers. Whether Lenin and the others were told about this modification is not clear. Jansson, a few days earlier, had returned from Sweden where he had spoke with Russian revolutionaries and, together with Parvus, had "briefed" the socialist leaders on the Russian problem.⁽³⁵⁾ He entered the train, presumably at Stuttgart, but it is said that Lenin refused to talk to him. Incidentally, the delay at Berlin violated Article Six of the agreement which Platten had negotiated with the Germans. What happened on the siding at Berlin is one secret that may never be pierced. As will appear presently, however, Lenin changed his mind about the Russian revolution after he left the Zähringer Hof, at Zürich, and before he arrived at the Finland Station at Petrograd.

Late on April 12 the revolutionaries passed into Sweden and were in Stockholm on April 14. Parvus had planned to meet the party at Malmö ; he had expected Axelrod and Martov to be accompanying Lenin. The meeting did not occur. Lenin refused to be seen with Parvus, and Parvus probably did not care to meet only Lenin. Instead, the arrivals were met by Hanecki, who commented on the unexplained delays in his memoirs. But Parvus did negotiate with "the Russian émigrés from Switzerland" and reported upon his conversations to the German Social Democratic party and to the Foreign Office.⁽³⁶⁾

Upon his arrival in Stockholm, Lenin spoke with Swedish socialists, asking them to "approve" the passage through Germany ; he also requested money to continue the trip. The travelers had signed a

statement confirming that Platten had “guaranteed” the trip only to Stockholm. Money was granted by the Swedes but Lenin asked for an additional 1,000 kroners for himself.⁽³⁷⁾ Thereupon he took time to buy himself shoes and pants which he needed badly, protesting all the while that he was not going to Russia to open a haberdashery. He then made a public statement to the effect that he had negotiated with Social Democrats “of various countries” and that the German Social Democrats would send representatives to a peace conference in Stockholm.

Although the statement may have been based upon his conversations with Hanecki, it is likely that this declaration was preceded by contacts with German socialists. Since he had not negotiated with German socialists in Switzerland, contacts must have taken place elsewhere.

Before leaving Sweden, Lenin appointed Hanecki to be the foreign representative of the Bolshevik Central Committee ; thus, in essence, Hanecki inherited Lenin’s position. Lenin knew full well, of course, that Hanecki was working closely with and through the Germans and that he belonged to Parvus’ organization. Karl Radek, who as an Austrian citizen was not permitted to enter Russia, became Hanecki’s assistant. V.V. Vorovsky also was in Sweden to help.³⁸

Upon entering Finland at Torneo, Lenin completed a form in which he stated that he was a Russian Orthodox, a political refugee, and a journalist. Furthermore, he stated that he was traveling on a certificate issued by the Russian Consulate General in Sweden. Platten was turned back by the British officers who were then in control of the Russian border crossings. The Germans made a feeble attempt to put the Danish socialist Borgbjerg on the train : a contact of Parvus, he had been traveling to Russia but had just been turned back by the well-informed British. Russian counter-intelligence later believed that a German military agent named “Müller” did get through with the transport.

Finally Lenin and his group arrive at Petrograd’s Finland Station, several hours late, at 10:30 P.M. on Monday, April 16, 1917. They were greeted by a huge crowd of workers, soldiers and revolutionaries, an honor

guard of Kronstadt sailors, and an official reception committee of the Petrograd soviet. Accompanied by the sounds of the “Marseillaise,” Lenin was guided to an armored car which had been brought by the Bolshevik military organization.⁽³⁹⁾ He mounted it and made a short speech of congratulations and of warnings about the possibility of becoming slaves of capitalism. The crowd howled and carried him into the Tsar’s reception room where he was presented with a large bouquet of flowers. He held the flowers clumsily in his hands as he listened to a speech by Menshevik N.S. Chkeidze, who spoke in the name of the soviet and expressed the “hope” that Lenin would not split the ranks of the revolutionary democracy. Lenin turned away. Pointedly ignoring Chkeidze, he made a sharply radical speech before exiting. He stopped again to speak before the station and then stepped into an automobile.

The crowd, however, was so large that the car could not begin to move. Lenin climbed upon the hood, spoke, and then tried again to get into the car, but Podvoisky asked him to mount upon a second armored car that the Bolsheviks had brought. Clad in a dark suit, white shirt, blue tie, black hat and shining shoes, Lenin, standing on top of the tank and overcome by emotion, presented a fiery speech calling for action. Then, illuminated by searchlights from the Peter and Paul Fortress, Lenin rode in the armored car to Kshezhinskaya Palace, formerly the home of the Tsar’s mistress,⁽⁴⁰⁾ and now headquarters of the Bolsheviks. (They had secured the palace by tolerated expropriation.) The rest of his party, including Krupskaya, presumably followed by car after the crowd had dispersed. Lenin again addressed the “masses” from the balcony and talked to his friends inside. To get a merry party underway, he proposed the singing of revolutionary songs.⁽⁴¹⁾ After 3:00 A.M. he and Krupskaya went to the rich bourgeois apartment of Yelizarov, where the Lenins were given a spacious room.⁽⁴²⁾ A servant girl stood ready for their use.

To everybody’s surprise, Lenin, before he even reached the streets of Petrograd, had advocated a *second* revolution. His listeners thought the job was to turn the first revolution into success. It was this “second

revolution” theme which induced one of the German political warfare managers to telegraph, on April 17, from Stockholm to Berlin :
“Lenin’s entry into Russia successful. He is working exactly as we would wish.”⁽⁴³⁾

1 Krupskaya, p. 337.

2 *Letters of Lenin*, p. 411 ; also Werner Hahlweg, *Lenin’s Rückkehr nach Russland 1917, die Deutschen Akten* (Leiden : Brill, 1957), p. 10.

3 Krupskaya, p. 338.

4 The leader of the left Social Revolutionaries was the veteran revolutionary Mark A. Natanson. He was the subject of an Okhrana report of February 20, 1905, which stated that he was in close contact with police agents with whom he sometimes spoke quite candidly. Victor Chernov, leader of the Social Revolutionaries and their foremost Zimmerwaldian defeatist, was in contact with the Austrians and later with the Germans through Alexander Evgenevich Zivin, whose role was partly confirmed by an Okhrana report of September 28, 1916. Zivin also was known as “Pyatnitsky,” and was associated with Natanson. There were several channels into the “international Mensheviks,” including Axelrod, probably via Moor.

5 See, for example, *Letters of Lenin*, p. 406. On Grimm, see Hahlweg, p. 51.

6 Text of this telegram in Hahlweg, p. 65.

7 Hanecki, after a short term of imprisonment, had been expelled from Denmark for smuggling and was now operating from Christiania (now Oslo), Malmö, and Stockholm. On Hanecki’s trial in Denmark, see the fascinating account by Futrell, pp. 179-190.

8 *Letters of Lenin*, p. 417.

9 Zeman, p. 26.

10 This probably was Georg Sklarz, one of the financiers of Hanecki’s trade in contraceptives and after the war exposed as a racketeer (Futrell, p. 190 and Hahlweg, 15).

11 Hanecki found a way to utilize Lenin’s picture : He inserted it in the Stockholm daily *Poliliken*, with the caption : “The leader of the Russian revolution” (Walter, p. 260).

12 *Letters of Lenin*, p. 421.

13 *Ibid.*, p. 421.

14 Zeman, p. 29.

15 *Ibid.*, p. 33.

16 *Ibid.*, p. 34.

17 *Letters of Lenin*, p. 421.

18 On Platten, see Hahlweg, pp. 18 and 77.

19 There is no record that Platten was paid before this transaction, but on May 29, 1918, “Friedrich” informed the German legation at Berne that Platten was in financial trouble. It appears that he was helped within five days, with Nasse acting as intermediary.

20 Platten’s expressed wish to die in Russia was fulfilled when he succumbed in one of Stalin’s slave labor camps. He moved to Russia permanently in 1924, lectured at an agricultural school, was arrested in 1939, died in 1942 in a camp near Arkhangel, and was rehabilitated under Khrushchev. He once made a speech to the effect that hundreds of thousands of corpses meant nothing if the happiness of the proletariat was at stake. *Neue Zürcher Zeitung*, October 9, 1956.

21 *Letters of Lenin*, p. 422.

22 Walter, p. 276f.

23 *Ibid.*, p. 277f.

24 Communist writers stress the dignity of this departure, yet German eye-witnesses described an unruly scene, with the Leninists and their opponents calling each other dirty names (see Walter, p. 278; Hahlweg, p. 96f. and *contra* p. 101).

25 Krupskaya (*op. cit.*, p. 345), playing tricks with the two calendars, after she had given dates according to the Western calendar, suddenly switched to the Russian practice and put the departure date on March 27. Even then she cut one day : Lenin departed on March 28 (Old Style). The effect of this manipulation is to advance Lenin’s return by fourteen days.

26 Krupskaya describes the little boy as the son of a Bundist woman, but from the list of signatures it is clear that it was the son of Zinovyev’s wife. Yet the relations between the Lenins and the Zinovyevs supposedly were very close !

27 A Caucasian agent of the Germans, Keresselidze, informed Romberg that he wanted to ensure further contacts with the Georgian who was traveling with Lenin. There also was a Soulichvili on the train but he apparently did not belong to the Bolshevik group. Keresselidze participated in the German financial support to the Bolsheviks during the summer of 1917. He and his brother, with the relative of another German agent, Dumbadze, had implicated the Russian

Minister of War in an espionage charge. The checkered career of Keresselidze cannot be detailed here, but *one* fact is noteworthy : according to an Okhrana letter of May 21, 1907, it appears that the brothers Keresselidze were given money by the police to be paid to a revolutionary committee but that a portion of the amount was embezzled by them and banked in Switzerland. “So are they all, all honorable men.”

28 During the purge trials, Sokolnikov, Radek, and Rakovsky, all of whom took part in the German-Bolshevik operation, were practically the only prominent Bolsheviks who received relatively light prison terms.

29 Krupskaya, p. 345.

30 Hahlweg, p. 23.

31 The scheduled travel time of thirty-two hours was quite long, an average speed of only twenty-two miles per hour for an express train. However, wartime conditions may explain this schedule.

32 German military files, it seems, have not been preserved.

33 Krupskaya, p. 345.

34 *Magdeburger Volkstimme*, May 16, 1917. Scheidemann had returned to Berlin from Scandinavia on April 10.

35 Philipp Scheidemann, *Memoiren eines Sozialdemokraten* (Dresden : Reissner, 1928), I. 421.

36 Hahlweg, p. 22 ; Zeman, pp. 42, 45f., 50.

37 Paul Olberg, *Vorwärts*, May 1, 1957.

38 Vorovsky was employed by the German industrial concern of Siemens-Schuckert ; of that firm’s Petrograd branch, Krassin was then the managing director (Futrell, p. 156).

39 G.V. Yelin, the Bolshevik headquarters commander, had to be persuaded to release the armored cars for this social occasion. He thought tanks were needed for other purposes. The government did not bestir itself to disarm the private armies of the various parties. See N.I. Podvoisky “V.I. Lenin v 1917 gody,” *Istoricheskii Arkhiv*, 1956, V. 6.

40 This relation had occurred many years earlier.

41 Yelena Stassova reported that he asked for the singing of the “Internationale” but the comrades did not know this song and just mumbled something.

42 Yelizarov apparently had participated on the Russian end in the Parvus-Hanecki smuggle operation, largely in partnership with the left Social Revolutionary Spiro, who at one time had

been connected with the Okhrana and who later served for a few weeks as Commissar of Post and Telegraph. (General A. Niessel, *Le triomphe des bolshéviki et la paix de Brest-Litovsk, souvenirs 1917-1918* (Paris : Plon, 1940), p. 122).

43 Zeman, p. 51.

Lenin : The Compulsive Revolutionary

Sudden Prominence

Lenin had expected to be arrested for treason. Instead he received a hero's welcome—except that his well-wishers did not know for which heroic deeds and social accomplishments he was to be praised. He was acclaimed as the “leader of the Petrograd masses, workers, soldiers and sailors,” yet he had never led them. Lenin's mystique was born during those hours of darkness in the parade which started at the Finland station and which the Mensheviks of the soviet had helped to organize in the naive hope that a triumphal reception would soften the radicalism of the nostalgic homecomer.

But Lenin could not be bribed by flattery so transparent in purpose. The entire Russian Bolshevik organization, at the time of the overthrow of the Tsar, had not numbered more than 5,000 members and 100 to 200 trained “cadres” and propagandists. There were at first only thirty Bolsheviks in the Petrograd soviet and most of these had not been elected but were co-opted by the members of the soviet. Such prominent leaders as Kamenev and Stalin arrived by the end of March from Siberia. Though membership had climbed to about 25,000, and soon was to reach 40,000, the question of seizure of power was considered untimely, and was conceived, in the image of the American spoils system, as seizure of the state apparatus by the socialists. There was some confusion, but most of the Bolsheviks, while debating within the soviet, gave qualified support to the government. For a few days, though they asked for immediate peace negotiations, the Bolsheviks

even advocated measures of defense. One revolutionary asserted that the Bolsheviks had become “de-bolshevized.”⁽¹⁾ Lenin’s first words at the Finland Station, so much at variance with his last public words in Switzerland, should have destroyed the illusion that he would support a moderate policy. But it was thought he would soon learn more about the “situation.”⁽²⁾ In the meantime, his new views shocked even Krupskaya who reportedly exclaimed : “I am afraid it looks as if Lenin has gone crazy.”⁽³⁾ Pravda described Lenin’s view as “unacceptable in that it starts from the assumption that the bourgeois democratic revolution is ended.”⁽⁴⁾

Still, sudden glory endowed Lenin with immunity. On the day after his arrival, the Petrograd soviet, albeit by implication, sanctioned Lenin’s trip. His case was ably defended by Zurabov, who for years had been connected with the Germans in Denmark. He was on the allied “control list” but returned to Russia as soon as the new government cleared him. Masquerading as a left Menshevik, Zurabov now functioned as a deputy in the soviet.

The soviet’s acquiescence to Lenin’s trip was not surprising. All the delegates were socialists, and they were not about to oppose one of their prominent comrades, irrespective of his lack of loyalty. The fear of helping the “counter-revolution” was an overriding consideration. But there was another point : the Germans had pumped money into several socialist groups and they had maintained contacts with others. These transactions were secret, but the politicians on the Executive Committee—the soviet’s only functioning body—knew enough not to take chances.

Still, the government could and should have taken forceful action. But it was composed of impractical “idealists” who had destroyed the counter-intelligence organization. Hence they were not equipped to prepare a strong case. The Minister of justice harbored sentiments of socialist solidarity. He was Alexander F. Kerensky, son of the Simbirsk school principal who had helped young Lenin to graduate after his brother’s

execution. There also existed some reluctance to initiate an open fight with the soviet. The moderates in the government expected Lenin to discredit radicalism. Since he could be relied upon to resort to his favorite splitting tactics, he might weaken the soviet which prevented the cabinet from governing by functioning as a second government.

Lenin struck as soon as the soviet had accepted his explanations of the trip through enemy territory. He vehemently opposed “defencism,” though he carefully avoided offending the “defencist” socialists. The revolution had to be propelled immediately into its second phase : the state was not to be simply “taken over” but demolished. Lenin hinted, without making the point explicit, that the socialist revolution would mean seizure of power by the Bolsheviks.

Lenin proclaimed that Russia was under a regime of “dual power”—that of the government and of the soviet.⁽⁵⁾ The Bolsheviks must run the soviet, directly or indirectly. The soviet would have to be developed primarily as an “organ of uprising.” It would assume full political power and create a new form of state (a parliamentary republic would be “a step back”). To begin with, agitation should be based upon the slogan “all power to the soviets” (i.e., destroy the government). The Bolsheviks were to strengthen their positions within the soviet while agitating for power to the soviet as a whole.

The idea expressed tactical genius but it shocked the party. The members thought that the notion of “smashing the state apparatus” constituted anarchism—which it was—and that Lenin’s tactics of “permanent revolution” were unrealistic—which they were not. The Petrograd party committee voted down his proposals. Against his opposition, a strong part of the Bolshevik Central Committee came out for reunification with the Mensheviks.⁽⁶⁾ Lenin was more or less isolated, but he remained unperturbed. He called Sverdlov from the Urals to Petrograd and they combined with Zinovyev in using their excellent knowledge of pre-war party membership to rebuild an organization loyal to Lenin. He did not neglect to establish “shock

units” in Kronstadt, Petrograd, and Helsingfors, recruiting or hiring radical Social Revolutionaries, anarchists, and criminals.

After some delay Lenin succeeded in drawing Stalin to his side, gaining a majority of one with a five to four edge in the Central Committee. This control enabled Lenin to select the delegates for the so-called April party conference and to gain a clear mandate for his policy. Initially he achieved this victory through his tactical skill and his abuse of intra-party democracy, but by the end of April or early May money became available.⁽⁷⁾ This helped enormously, especially in the hurried recruiting of goon squads.

Lenin entered what might be considered the most satisfying three months of his life. Shortly after his arrival he became editor of *Pravda*, which had started publication again on March 18. Lenin could indulge in venting his hatreds against other socialists, and, he venomously attacked those who were accusing him of subversive dealings with the Germans. Though a pedantic writer when discussing theoretical problems, Lenin was a gifted journalist. Some of the fiery short articles he wrote were examples of prime polemic writing.

Lenin’s private life was quiet, however. Inessa had gone to Moscow, which suggests that love had abated and that, perhaps, she took the initiative in terminating the affair.⁽⁸⁾ In any event, too obvious a relation was not advisable. Since at long last Lenin was able to operate as he wished, politics was now of overriding and absolute importance.

By_ early May Lenin had acquired enormous authority and personal prestige. He was treated as the formal and undisputed head of the Bolshevik party. He opened and closed party conferences. However interminably and rudely he spoke to the soviet of peasants and at the All-Russian soviet, he was listened to with respect. Opposing the government, he incessantly called for “all power to the soviets.” Indefatigably he agitated for national self-determination of the non-Russian peoples, the dissolution of the army, fraternization at the front,⁽⁹⁾ the immediate termination of the war, and a *de facto* truce on the front ;

to keep face, he protested against separate peace with Germany. At this point the Germans had adopted a strategy of virtual inaction but had increased propaganda at the battlefield. Parvus was one of the instigators of this strategy. Thus advanced the world revolution.

These exhortations and hopes had become meaningful to millions of Russians. It so happened that Lenin's slogans coincided with German interests except, of course, for his muted calls for a revolution in Germany. Since the summer of 1915 the Germans had been particularly interested in defeatist "disorganizing" and "disintegrating" propaganda within the Russian army. Now the tempo of this effort increased. On April 28, a few days after Lenin's arrival, *Soldiers' Pravda* (shortly afterwards renamed *Trench Pravda*) began publication. Lenin's confidant during the publication period of the first *Pravda*, Podvoisky, took charge of the operation which gave fraternization at the front a clear political meaning. The paper, which was officially issued by the Social Democratic military organizations in the Latvian region, rapidly achieved wide circulation at the front but, on June 17, the editor, a certain Khaustov, was arrested as a German spy. (Even before Lenin's return, a member of the *Pravda* staff had been arrested as an enemy agent.) Little incidents like this passed unnoticed in the general enthusiasm for the new political life. Lenin's socialist comrades had decided that the opposition to Leninism should be based purely on ideological differences. [\(10\)](#)

Though Lenin was the formal leader of his party, there exists ample evidence that outside forces were agitating. Lenin's interests did not entirely coincide with those of the Germans. The latter, vitally concerned about the military effort of Russia, were anxious to create unrest to as great a degree and as rapidly as possible. Lenin, by contrast, was anxious to seize power, but for this very reason had to be careful not to undertake premature moves. His timing had to be in harmony with the attitudes of the masses rather than with the interests of the Germans. He later commented that the existing government, though it would eventually have to topple, could not be overthrown immediately. "We

are no Blanquists. We do not want to rule with a minority . . . against the majority.”⁽¹¹⁾

In April, 1917, Lenin favored peaceful demonstrations as a means to strengthen the party and spread his slogans. Yet, early in May, the government announced its loyalty to the Allies and supported national defense. This created a sore point with the Germans. There was little spontaneous unrest, but German agents rapidly got busy. On May 7 Riezler received a report from “Uno” (probably Jansson) advising means of aiding the “activists” in Petrograd. On May 14 the Wilhelmstrasse was told that Jansson and Steinwachs had established contacts with *all* groups of the Social Democratic party. Bolsheviks had built up cells in two or three regiments by incessantly delivering speeches to soldiers in their barracks. A Bolshevik specialist in military work, F.F. Linde of the Finland Guard Reserve Regiment,⁽¹²⁾ led the rebellious soldiers into the streets.⁽¹³⁾ Investigation showed that the demonstrations were prepared in advance : there were banners and placards, many with expertly executed drawings. The demonstrators were led by agitators and accompanied by armed men. “Provocative shots” were fired and casualties resulted.⁽¹⁴⁾ The government’s palace was surrounded and the mutinous soldiers were preparing to arrest the government. Such a step would have boomeranged. After a few shots were fired, the soviet, which had full authority, called a halt to the operation. The military wanted to suppress the demonstration, but the leaders of the democratic government, G.E. Lvov and A.F. Kerensky, decided to rely on “moral influence.”

An insurrection attempt would also have been a grave mistake from the Bolshevik point of view. Later Lenin, who had been surprised, counseled moderation and admitted that this operation “was not organized by the party.” He asserted that those who stood to the left of the Central Committee were “crazy.” He reminisced later that this upsurge—“somewhat more than an armed demonstration and somewhat less than an armed uprising”—opened his eyes to the potentialities of a popular insurrection.^(14a)

Lenin's behavior was unusual and did not quite fit the legend. It could not but disappoint the Germans who expected more than agitation for an international socialist conference. Lenin turned to the land question and sometimes obliquely, other times vehemently, suggested to the peasants that they should set up committees and seize land : there was no risk of prematurity in localized rural uprisings. This tactic (which can be traced back to Bakunin) was well coordinated with the Germans who in their front propaganda were telling the Russian soldiers the same thing as Lenin and, to induce mass desertions, were spreading the rumor that the land was being grabbed by those who had stayed at home. This propaganda technique had been suggested to the Germans, not by a revolutionary but, on April 17, 1917, by an otherwise unknown Count Corvin Milewsky, who during World War I was a resident of Holland. This effort was most effective in revolutionizing Russia.

The Bolsheviks were flourishing. Under Vyacheslav M. Molotov, a press bureau (*byuro pechati*) was established and with "special funds"⁽¹⁵⁾ furnished by the Central Committee it financed and enlarged ten provincial party papers plus *Trench Pravda* and the chief organ, *Pravda*, in Petrograd. The considerable source of the "special funds" which supported a dozen papers is unrecorded, but the historian of this effort was I.S. Sazonov, who participated in the labors of the bureau. This fact suggests that Berlin was the main source of the funds.⁽¹⁶⁾ However, given Sazonov's contacts with an agent of Erzberger rather than the Foreign Office, presumably these funds were funneled through Erzberger's organization which did specialize in "press work." These funds would have been used *in addition* to those budgeted by the Foreign Office. Incidentally, the first issue of the bureau's *Bulletin* contained an article by Stalin. It is open to speculation if he and Molotov knew or surmised the financing of the bureau's farflung operations.⁽¹⁷⁾

When Shotman visited Lenin by the end of May or early June, Lenin proudly showed him a new and modern press which was capable of increasing the output of *Pravda*. Lenin related that the printing press

had been made available by the Finnish party, a most unlikely source of such supplies.⁽¹⁸⁾ In any event, on June 3, 1917, Berlin informed Romberg that Lenin's peace propaganda was getting stronger and that the disorganization of the Russian army was progressing.

To disprove this kind of talk, the Russian government again felt the need to display its army's power and the firmness of Russia's alliance with France, Britain, and the United States. They decided upon a military offensive. This decision soon was known and openly debated in the press. A victorious Russian offensive might have changed the entire military situation. German propaganda outlets immediately became active. Lenin, maintaining that an offensive would entail the slaughtering of Russian workers and peasants, demanded an immediate peace offer to the suppressed classes of all countries, a peace anchored to the destruction of capitalism.

At the beginning of June the Petrograd municipal elections were held on the basis of universal suffrage and the Bolsheviks polled one-sixth of the vote. This percentage was still quite small, but on June 4, Lenin declared in the All-Russian soviet that the Bolsheviks were prepared to assume power, a declaration that was received with some applause and much laughter. *Pravda*, the Germans reported, was selling 300,000 copies daily⁽¹⁹⁾—a large circulation, especially when one considers the other subsidiary organs.⁽²⁰⁾ But trouble was brewing: one of the Bolsheviks who had returned with Lenin through Germany was implicated in a criminal affair (theft of jewelry) and the Malinovsky story broke. The debate about the offensive was an excellent diversion but the Germans, who had determined the approximate battle date through radio intelligence, desired action.

On June 19 the Bolshevik military organization of Petrograd, over which Lenin exercised little control, began preparations for an ostensibly peaceful—but actually armed—demonstration. Austrian diplomats in Stockholm were told by one of their academic agents that Olof Aschberg, director of Nya Banken, had discovered that Lenin was

preparing to strike within a few days.⁽²¹⁾ If successful he would take power, but it was likely that the attempt would fail. On June 21 Lenin was prevailed upon to approve of the planned demonstration. The plan envisaged that in case of popular support, the main government buildings were to be occupied, the government arrested, and power seized by the Central Committee. A lengthy proclamation was issued, the substance of which was that the soldiers should join the workers in the streets and that not a single regiment or division should remain in the barracks. It called for the control and organization of industry, for the concentration of all power in the soviet, and for “bread, peace, liberty.” The text emphasized that there were to be no secret treaties with the allies and no separate peace with Germany. This phrase was telegraphed by a *Pravda* editor, Bronislav Veselovski, to Hanecki and thereupon was published in the German press.⁽²²⁾

The demonstration took place on June 23, but there was little support. The All-Russian soviet, thirteen per cent of whose delegates were Bolsheviks, asked the Bolsheviks to end the operation. The Bolsheviks rejected the request. Thereupon the Petrograd soviet forbade demonstrations for three days. The Bolshevik military leaders wanted a “test of strength” but Lenin interfered and cancelled the operation. Chernov, a Social Revolutionary leader of strong Zimmerwald convictions who enjoyed direct or indirect Austrian and German support,⁽²³⁾ commented that Lenin was shrewd enough to avoid political suicide.

It was suggested in the soviet that the Bolsheviks be disarmed and the mutinous regiments disbanded. Martov, who had recently arrived via Germany, protested that there was no enemy on the left and that the most important task was to prevent a counter-revolution. The Menshevik Weinstein alleged that, lest the counter-revolution win, Bolshevik force should be subdued by *non-violence*. Of course, Weinstein was in communication with German socialists in Stockholm.

On June 25 the soviet, surprisingly, announced open support of the offensive. This meant that the Germans were forced to create unrest again. A revolutionary center was formed inside the Bolshevik party to put pressure on Lenin. However, countermoves were made and, on June 29, the Bolshevik military organization decided to restrain from demonstrating as yet.

On July 1 the Russian military offensive began. The event rapidly swelled the Bolshevik ranks. The Bolsheviks proposed a demonstration. Partly to neutralize this effort and partly to bring about reconciliation, the Mensheviks decided to join with the Bolsheviks in this demonstration. The Bolsheviks stole the show with greater numbers, large quantities of streamers and leaflets, and forceful slogans, but the demonstration had no national impact. The Germans were so worried about Lenin's failure to stop the offensive that they established relations with the anarchists, who attacked the main prison, liberating criminals and deserters. Bolshevik and anarchist agitators, propagandizing military units, advocated rebellion and mutiny. The Germans and Austrians increased their front propaganda and stepped up distribution of their own Russian language publications. Fraternization was reoriented to conduct "peace negotiations" from regiment to regiment.

The Russian offensive soon weakened. According to Lenin's interpretation, a turning point in the revolution had been reached ; but he feared a blood bath in which the groups which wanted to advance the revolution would be exterminated. Kamenev and Stalin supported him against Raskolnikov, a lieutenant and Bolshevik leader of the Kronstadt naval base, and Ensign A.Y. Semashko, [\(24\)](#) both of whom were insisting on an uprising. On July 5, Bolsheviks from the Central Committee, the Petrograd committee, and the military organizations resolved to begin the uprising. Lenin undoubtedly disagreed with the decision. Though the uprising was expected to spark a German counterblow at the front, it was politically premature.

By July 11 the Russian offensive had turned into defeat and a German counteroffensive was about to be initiated. The next day Lenin went to Finland, accompanied by Demyan Bedny, the poet, to take a summer rest with his sister Maria in Bonch-Bruyevich's *dacha* in the village of Naivola—a vacation “in a sea of trouble.” He was completely exhausted and suffered from such insomnia that sleeping pills were prescribed.

The uprising started late on July 15.⁽²⁵⁾ It was launched by a machine gun regiment following Semashko's orders. Other military units, notably a sailor detachment from Kronstadt, and a few civilian groups joined.⁽²⁶⁾ There was a fair amount of popular unrest. Yet to get large masses of demonstrators and soldiers into the streets, money was necessary. And indeed, German agents were distributing money freely in 5, 10 and 25-ruble notes.⁽²⁷⁾

The rising really got under way in the afternoon of July 16. In the evening the soldiers and workers of Petrograd were called into the streets. The soviet was surrounded and vainly was requested by the demonstrators to assume governmental power. The Central Committee had very little control. The insurgent troops (altogether five reserve regiments) were firmly in the hands of the Bolshevik military leaders. Lenin returned early on July 17 and made an insipid speech but did not call a halt to the uprising.

By the evening of July 17, despite government counteractions, the Bolsheviks, for all practical purposes, still controlled Petrograd. Yet there was no real mass support ; the operation was in the nature of a *putsch* rather than an uprising. The continuing lack of visible success, as well as food, water, and other bodily needs caused restlessness among the masses.

At this time, some enterprising souls disseminated information demonstrating “definite proof of Bolshevik treason.” Yet before the insurgents were handed newspapers and leaflets accusing Lenin of being a German agent, an assistant of the Minister of Justice, N.S. Karinsky, secretly informed Bonch-Bruyevich that there was a plan underway to

indict Lenin. He warned that there was adequate evidence. Between seven and eight o'clock that night, the Central Committee, with Lenin's approval, called off the "manifestation." Lenin went into hiding. The government deployed loyal military forces ; many Bolshevik units, shocked by the disclosures, were easily disarmed. Other Bolshevik troops inadvertently began to fire upon each other. Panic ensued, and immediately thereafter a thunderstorm followed by a heavy downpour emptied the streets. Within a few weeks the party was to lose half of its membership. Bolshevism seemed to be crushed forever.

1 Walter, p. 286ff.

2 Shub, p. 190 ; also Schapiro, p. 161f.

3 Raphael R. Abramovitch, *The Soviet Revolution 1917-1939*, (New York : International Universities Press, 1962), p. 80.

4 Quoted from Schapiro, p. 164.

5 This was not original with him. The formula was first expressed by Y.M. Steklov on March 17, 1917. See *The Russian Provisional Government 1917, documents*, ed. Robert P. Browder and Alexander F. Kerensky (3 Vols., Hoover Institution, Stanford University Press, 1961), III, 1224.

6 Many local party organizations until the Bolshevik seizure of power remained, despite Lenin's efforts, jointly Bolshevik-Menshevik in their composition (Schapiro, p. 164).

7 On April 25 Lenin wrote to Hanecki and Radek complaining that so far "exactly nothing" had been received ; "no letters, no packages, no money from you." *Letters of Lenin*, p. 424. On May 4, he confirmed receipt of "2000" from Kozlovsky (*Proletarskaya Revolyutsiya*, No. 9 (21), 1923, p. 231).

8 "During the war Lenin wrote more letters to Inessa Armand than to any other person, whether relative or disciple . . . Lenin wrote more frequently and at greater length to her than to anyone else.... From November 20, 1916, to ... the February revolution in 1917, he wrote . . . more to her than to all the rest put together. In his letters to Inessa, as always, preoccupation with politics is uppermost. But tone and depth reveal facets of his nature exhibited in no other letters." (Wolfe, "Lenin and Inessa Armand", p. 104f.) During January 1915, Inessa sent Lenin the outline for a pamphlet on the women's question which elicited a critical reaction by Lenin on the subject of

“free love” and “freedom of adultery.” Inessa was deeply hurt (Wolfe, p. 109) but Lenin succeeded in explaining himself. In his last letter to her written in Switzerland between March 25 and 31, 1917, he still assumed they would be unable to go to Russia (*Sochineniya*, 4th ed., Vol. 35, p. 248). Although he chided her for being nervous, the relationship appears to have remained intact. (In his wartime letters, Lenin no longer addressed her by *ty* but by *vy*; Wolfe interprets this, correctly, as a conspiratorial move to deceive wartime censorship.) There are no data to indicate the reasons why, upon arriving in Russia, the two separated.

9 Lenin’s first article on this subject appeared in *Pravda* on April 28.

10 For an example, see Browder-Kerensky, *op. cit.*, 11, 1094.

11 Lenin mainly criticized Blanqui’s disregard for the importance of the masses. His main statements on Blanqui appear in *Sochineniya*, 4th ed., Vols. 10, p. 360; 12, p. 88f.; 15, p. 337ff.; 17, p. 129f.; 24, pp. 21, 29, 119, 186f., 206, 233, 288f.; 25, pp. 282, 406; 26, pp. 4f., 181; 28, p. 281; 29, p. 132; 30, p. 458; and 31, pp. 48, 69.

12 Abramovitch, (p. 37) described “Fedor Linde” as a teacher of mathematics and philosophy, then serving as a private.

13 Linde poses an interesting puzzle. On March 24, 1916, the Paris Okhrana agency reported to Petrograd on a German secret agent, von der Linde, who was working against Russia and was then in Switzerland. A “Linde” returned with Lenin on the sealed train. This may have been the same Linde whose archive Shotman in 1913 brought to Lenin in Poronin (Shotman, *op. cit.*, p. 300f). Another “Linde” sometimes also described as “F.F. Linde” was in Petrograd on March 14. He was one of the first soldier delegates to the soviet, and apparently had a hand in drafting the soviet’s Order No. 1 which, by instituting soviets throughout the army, greatly weakened Russia’s military strength. The above Linde was identified as a Social Democrat and left intellectual who was a member of the soviet’s executive committee by April, 1917, and later became a political commissar and was killed on the front in 1918. A Fritz Linde, also known as Karl Y. Pechak, was arrested in November, 1914, together with several Bolshevik Duma members, and, was sent to Siberia because of “cooperation with German and Austrian military interests” (Tsiavlovsky, *op. cit.*, p. 156). One element of confusion is that “Fritz” also seems to have used “Alexander” as his first name. The odds are, however, that there were two Lindes. There were quite a few teams of brothers and cousins acting in unison.

14 Browder-Kerensky, *op. cit.*, II, 1242. The examining magistrate requested the soviet to make available the results of their finding on this unrest. This request was complied with only after long delays. Hence the organizers were not identified. In September the prosecutor dropped the case. This example of inefficiency, procrastination, and unwillingness to stop subversion was typical of the way “Russian democracy” handled the “internal threat.”

14a “Noviye dokumenty V.I. Lenina,” *Voprosy Istorii KPSS*, No. 5, Moscow, 1958, p. 16.

15 *Istoricheskii Arkhiv* (1955), No. 5, p. 200f.

16 See also Schapiro, p. 177.

17 It is not a foregone conclusion that all this financing was done with genuine money. There are indications that forged rubles were used also, though apparently largely in connection with “demonstrations.” It will be recalled that Parvus proposed an ambitious “strategic” scheme for money forging. Perhaps the Germans followed up this suggestion, but only on a “tactical” level. The Russian government had been informed to the effect that the Germans possessed plates for the printing of 10-ruble notes. B.V. Nikitine, *The Fatal Years* (London : Hodge, 1938), p. 114.

18 Shotman, p. 386. The Finnish socialists did make available paper to Bolshevik and other socialist newspapers. On two or three occasions they reportedly also gave the Bolsheviks several thousands of rubles (Futrell, p. 159f.). This money, which came through Karl Wiik who in turn was tied in with Hanecki, may have been of German origin. Naturally, small Finnish collections may have been used to cover up for the larger sums.

19 Austrian documents put this figure at 400,000.

20 On December 3, 1917, the German Secretary of State, Richard von Kuehlmann, stated in a report for the German military High Command, “It was not until the Bolsheviks had received from us a steady flow of funds through various channels and under varying labels that they were in a position to be able to build up their main organ, *Pravda*, . . . and appreciably to extend the originally narrow basis of their operation.” (Zeman, p. 94) Unfortunately, there are no exact figures. From related data in the German file it would appear that a paper with a printing of 400,000 would run a deficit of at least 500,000 dollars annually. This would be equivalent to close to 100,000 rubles per month (pre-war parity).

21 Austrian Archives, *Politisches Archiv*, Rot 834, Krieg 3, Russland, June-September, 1917.

22 Browder-Kerensky, *op. cit.*, III, 1369. The Russian government established that there was only one outgoing telegram discussing Bolshevik slogans.

23 Through Zivin, his intermediary with the Germans.

24 This was not Dr. Semashko, Lenin’s medical friend and party treasurer after Victor Taratuta, but presumably his cousin. Semashko was ordered to go to the front in April but refused and concentrated on organizing Bolshevik cells in the Petrograd garrison.

25 The timing was in accord with German tactical requirements. The Bolsheviks were well informed on events at the front because of their infiltration into the communication and telegraphic services. Through these same infiltrators rumors were spread to the front that the Bolsheviks had assumed power in Petrograd and were calling off the war.

26 According to the *London Times* of July 19, 1917, there were also demonstrations by national groups clamoring for self-determination.

27 Nikitine, p. 111f.

Accusation of Treason

Subversive warfare stood the Germans in good stead. The great Russian offensive, which had been undertaken with a considerable numerical superiority and with an ample supply of weapons, had not been successful. The failure was largely due to the unwillingness of the troops to fight. Desertion and self-mutilation rates reached unprecedented heights. The German counteroffensive routed the Russian army so quickly that the Germans were unable to apply their encirclement tactics.

The entire calamity, however, was not due to the Bolsheviks. The main cause of the military disaster lay in disorganization. Each unit and every group of specialists had formed its own soviet.⁽¹⁾ The soldiers spent much time debating and voting. Many soviets, particularly those under Bolshevik influence, thought it their duty to countermand military orders. All socialist parties bore responsibility for this state of affairs. The defencists called for the offensive but at the same time refused to rectify the disorder within the army. The soldiers were weary, but still were susceptible to firm leadership. The Bolsheviks, of course, concentrated on deepening and giving ideological meaning to the “pacifist” mood of the soldiers. But without the help—mostly through inaction—of the other socialists, Bolshevik subversion would not have succeeded.

The Germans had taken great pains to protect the security of their clandestine operations. Their payments to the revolutionaries were concealed according to the wishes of the recipients. These were the rules as stated in one German document : “ 1) The personality of the donor would guarantee that the money came from an unobjectionable source. 2) The donor or the bearer of the money should be enabled . . . to cross the Russian frontier. 3) . . . ready cash, . . . Swiss currency could be turned most easily, most efficiently, and least obtrusively into liquid and useful form.”⁽²⁾

Despite precautions the secret was not well guarded. In April the socialist French Minister Albert Thomas had warned the Russian government after studying intelligence reports. In May the military High Command had given to the Department of justice a voluminous dossier on the case. French officers in Petrograd who specialized in communications intelligence had volunteered their services. The government itself had taken the case under advisement and a cabinet committee was investigating. Yet no action was undertaken to stop Bolshevik activities, though one armed demonstration had taken place, another had been attempted, and now an operation which bordered upon a mass uprising was in progress.

As the crisis became more acute, permission was obtained from the Minister of justice to publicize the presumed treason. Alexinsky, who knew a great deal about these matters, and who for many years had been very close to Lenin, and V.S. Pankratov, an old reputable revolutionary who had spent a long period in Schluselburg prison at hard labor, were elected to act as “channels.” Invoking their “revolutionary duty,” these two men warned Russian citizens of the dangers to their liberty and security. This warning was put into a letter to the committee of journalists attached to the provisional government. Several cabinet members and delegates to the soviet speedily intervened to prevent publication of the letter ; it was printed in only one obscure newspaper.

The Alexinsky-Pankratov letter consisted of two parts, the first explanation based upon counter-intelligence and the second largely on censorship intelligence. In the first part of their letter, Alexinsky and Pankratov stated that on May 8, 1917, Ensign Yermolenko a Russian prisoner in Germany, was dispatched behind Russian lines to agitate for a speedy separate peace. German officers Schiditzki and Lubbers told him that peace propaganda was being disseminated by A. Skoropis-Yoltukhovsky, of the Bund for the Liberation of the Ukraine, and by Lenin, who was commissioned to undermine the confidence of the Russian people in the government. Money for this purpose was

transmitted through a certain Svendsen at the German legation in Stockholm.⁽³⁾

The report stated that Yermolenko's file had been forwarded to the Ministry for examination on April 28, i.e., before Yermolenko crossed back into Russian territory—an indication that Yermolenko may have been a counter-intelligence agent who had originally been dispatched by the Russians to the Germans.⁽⁴⁾

It was impossible to confirm the existence of Captain Schiditzki, who may have been Yermolenko's interrogator. However, the existence of Captain von Lubbers is substantiated by documentary evidence. He was assigned to the Unterkunfts-Departement of the German War Ministry, where he was placed in charge of prisoner-of-war propaganda. If Yermolenko did talk to Lubbers, he was, indeed, in communication with one of the top men. Although it is improbable that the Germans would have given secret information to a Russian prisoner, they might have acted incautiously if they had believed they were dealing with a prominent leader. Possibly Yermolenko was able to present adequate credentials or offer references from Ukrainian socialist and nationalist politicians.

Alexander Skoropis-Yoltukhovsky did run the Ukrainian Bund. This was rather widely known, but Lenin's connection with the Bund had been successfully concealed. Though the report did not suggest such a connection, Lenin must have been shocked and frightened by the juxtaposition of himself with Skoropis, even though he probably did not know much about the rest of the information.

The second portion of the letter stated that the Germans were transmitting money and instructions through Hanecki and Parvus in Stockholm, who then were communicating with Mecheslav Yulevich Kozlovsky, a Bolshevik attorney, and Eugenia Mavrikiievna Sumenson, a woman relative of Hanecki. Kozlovsky was described as the chief recipient of the German money that was transferred from Berlin through the Diskonto-Gesellschaft to the Stockholm Nya Banken and thence to

the Siberian Bank in Petrograd where Kozlovsky presently held a balance of over two million rubles.

The Minister of justice was upset over the leaking of this detailed information which undoubtedly allowed some culprits to seek cover. Kerensky stated that Hanecki was preparing to cross the border with incriminating documents which would have clinched the case, but the leak kept him in Sweden. Hanecki hardly was so inexperienced as to carry compromising evidence on his person : Kerensky's complaint about the leak was not entirely genuine.

In the main, the information about Hanecki was correct, but Parvus did not, so far as is known, communicate directly with Petrograd. Sumenson's and Kozlovsky's names do not appear in German documents. Whether Sumenson was related to Hanecki is not known, but she worked for the firm of Fabian Klingsland which was the Petrograd correspondent of Hanecki's export firm. Kozlovsky was described as a Polish socialist, but he served on the initial executive committee of the Petrograd soviet for the Latvian Social Democratic party. A certain Kozlovsky from Russia was a member of the Ukrainian Bund in Vienna during 1914, but the first names do not coincide. However, there is evidence that Kozlovsky, already in 1915, was connected with Parvus. He offered money to publish a socialist paper, and before the revolution traveled several times to Scandinavia dealing in revolutionary finances.⁽⁶⁾ He also acted as legal adviser to Parvus. After the Bolshevik seizure of power, ironically, Kozlovsky was appointed to prosecute Alexinsky's case. (Kozlovsky died in 1927.)

The Diskonto Gesellschaft, a foremost German bank, certainly was uninvolved in these matters. A German diplomat, reading the text of the letter, wrote between the lines that "probably Parvus' firm" was meant, but the Germans later intercepted a telegram sent by the London *Times* correspondent in which he stated that the money was transferred through the Loan and Discount Bank at Copenhagen. No further explanation is found in the German file.

The Nya Banken, under Aschberg, affiliated with Swedish socialists, had handled many ruble transactions for the Germans during the war.

Aschberg, who had dealt with tsarist Russia and American bankers, had arranged a Russian commercial loan in the U.S. and later related in his memoirs how he had succeeded in traveling back and forth across the Russian border by using bribes. Aschberg had assisted at Protopopov's conference with a German diplomat during 1916, and also was acquainted with Krassin. After 1917 the Bolsheviki apparently employed him for bank transactions abroad. For many years he was, in Sweden, considered to be something of a "Red banker." The intercepted-and unpublished—telegram by the *Times* correspondent stated that Aschberg had confirmed the business transactions but "thought" that they served honest business purposes. Years later he reasserted the same version adding, however, that possibly Hanecki sent money to Russia (i.e. to Sumenson) in small amounts.⁽⁷⁾ Unfortunately, Aschberg died before he could bring himself to discuss these matters frankly.



As soon as the story broke, the Germans hurriedly organized a denial campaign. *Dagens Nyheter*, on July 22, published a denial by Hanecki, Radek, and Vorovsky.⁽⁸⁾ Sumenson suddenly was described personally as a man who acted as managing clerk of a Petrograd firm which represented the Swiss chocolate firm Nestle and an export company run by Hanecki. Hence Hanecki had sent money to Stockholm but not the other way around.⁽⁹⁾ There are indeed some vague indications that Nestlé⁽¹⁰⁾ was abused for some transactions but, in any event, no evidence was submitted to prove the alleged remittances from Petrograd to Stockholm.

The denial also stated that Hanecki had no connections with Helphand (Parvus), incongruously adding that he had business dealings with him. Moreover, many Social Democrats maintained business relations with

Parvus ; the name of a prominent Menshevik was brought up to exculpate the Bolshevik suspect. Hanecki denied knowing “Svenson.” (“Svenson” probably was a pseudonym of Hans Steinwachs, who before 1917 had acted as Kesküla’s case officer and who now was handling finances for revolutionizing at Stockholm.)⁽¹¹⁾

On July 24 Vorovsky telegraphed to Sklarz in Berlin requesting him to deny under oath, before a suitable forum in Copenhagen, that he gave money to the Bolsheviks or to Lenin through Hanecki or other persons. This telegram is odd in that Sklarz’s name had not yet been mentioned publicly. The Germans deemed it inadvisable to fulfill the request. Hanecki also sent a telegram asking “Alexander” (i.e., Parvus) to travel to Copenhagen immediately.

On July 26 *Soldati i Rabochii*, then the name of *Pravda*, acknowledged that Hanecki and Kozlovsky had been working for Parvus. On July 31, 1917, Hanecki, in *Russische Korrespondenz Prawda*, admitted that he had worked in a trading firm connected with Parvus. He did so, he said, to support his family and the Social Democratic party in Warsaw (then occupied by the Germans). But he added that he considered Parvus to be an honorable man : “Only history can show who was right in judging the man Parvus: Lenin or Hanecki.”⁽¹²⁾

In the meantime, Karinsky, who had warned Bonch-Bruyevich of the case against Lenin, had—in a typical switch—been put in charge of prosecuting the affair. (He resigned this office by mid-September.⁽¹³⁾) Despite his inauspicious attitude he had gathered extensive documentation. He reported part of his findings on August 4. The indictment was drawn up for treason and organized armed rebellion. Those who were indicted for rebellion were not necessarily accused of treason and vice versa. The accusations against Semashko, Raskolnikov, Kollontai, Trotsky, and Lunacharsky dealt with rebellion ; those against the group headed by Lenin, Zinovyev, Parvus, and Hanecki, with treason. There was no mention of Hanecki’s probably not

being a Russian citizen ; Parvus was not either, but perhaps this was not known.

Concerning the rebellion, it was stated that a search of Bolshevik headquarters had revealed that the revolt had been ordered by the Central Committee. From those headquarters instructions had been issued to military units ordering them to place armored cars and a cruiser at the disposal of the Bolshevik military organization. The search disclosed deployment lists of suitable military units, “armed workers,” cell leaders, contacts, and Bolshevik intelligence operators. An interesting discovery was literature of the arch-reactionary *Union of the Russian People* and large numbers of post cards illustrating ritual murder. Presumably this material was to be used to stimulate the fear of counter-revolution—a chief factor preventing socialists and liberals from taking action against the Bolsheviks.⁽¹⁴⁾

The indictment stated, with respect to Lenin’s treason, that “while residing in the German part of Switzerland” Lenin was in contact with Parvus, frequented camps of Ukrainian prisoners of war, and carried on propaganda for the separation of the Ukraine from Russia.⁽¹⁵⁾ The evidence, it was stupidly alleged, pointed to Lenin as a German agent⁽¹⁶⁾ who had an agreement with Germany and went to Petrograd “to aid Germany in her war with Russia.” It was this unfounded allegation which vitiated much of the later discussion of Lenin’s relations with the Germans.

Further, it was stated that in April an attempt was made from Stockholm to publish a newspaper to oppose England and France, that Lenin and Zinovyev were arrested in October, 1914, in Austria, that they were released upon order by the Austrian Prime Minister, and that Hanecki played an important role in their release.

In addition, it maintained that Hanecki had worked closely with Parvus in Copenhagen, that Kozlovsky had traveled to Copenhagen and acted as legal adviser to Parvus, who was proposing the financing of a steamship company in Russia, and that Parvus, Hanecki, and Kozlovsky visited

Berlin. It was held that the telegraphic correspondence which Sumenson, Lenin, Kollontai, and Kozlovsky in Petrograd had with Hanecki and Parvus in Sweden was “a cover-up for relations of an espionage character.”⁽¹⁷⁾ During the past six months, Sumenson had withdrawn 750,000 rubles from her account ; the balance was 180,000 rubles.⁽¹⁸⁾

Other data could not “as yet be made public.” But the information pointed to the fact that the accused were assisting in the disorganization of the Russian army and that they were conducting propaganda to inhibit military actions against the enemy. The armed insurrection, moreover, “was accompanied by murders and violence.” Lenin replied on August 8 and 9 in *Rabochy i Soldat*. He first commented on his role in the rebellion. He had left Petrograd on July 12 “on account of illness” and returned only on July 17, when he delivered a single speech—and that lacked significance. This was true enough, except that he overly stressed his illness. He assumed full responsibility, he wrote, for all steps and measures taken by the Central Committee and the party, but failed to say how he was able to discharge this responsibility. As to the accusation about relations with Germany, Lenin felt that this was another “Beilis case.”⁽¹⁹⁾ Lenin claimed that the accusations “parroted” the slanders of calumniator Alexinsky ; but Alexinsky had simply distributed information which had been leaked to him from the justice Department. Lenin corrected the claim that Zinovyev had been arrested in Austria ; he could have added that he himself had been arrested in August and not in October. He also related that he was arrested not as a Russian subject but as a spy. He denied that Hanecki played a part in his release but this denial was false. He said it was “a contemptible lie” to assert that he had relations with Parvus ; but he had such relations, and Parvus soon mischievously confirmed in print one of his meetings with Lenin during this period.⁽²⁹⁾ Lenin stated that it was untrue that he had visited military camps ; he was correct in adding that “nothing of the kind happened, or could even happen.” He denied, untruthfully, any connection with the Ukrainian Bund and ignored the allegation about Ukrainian separatists’ propaganda.

A telegram seized in Bolshevik headquarters about a money deal in Stockholm had been misunderstood by the prosecutor. Lenin seized upon it and disproved more than the error warranted. He denied “financial dealings” with Hanecki. However, letters already mentioned disprove this denial. It is also noteworthy that Lenin’s address book showed three different entries for Kozlovsky’s home, office and his extension in the soviet :⁽²¹⁾ this fact indicates that Lenin was quite well informed about the secret machinations of his aides.⁽²²⁾

In his reply in *Rabochy i Soldat* Lenin frankly admitted Hanecki’s relation with Parvus. Offering no explanation why he maintained contact with Hanecki, who was a friend of the “social chauvinist” Parvus, Lenin poked fun at the point that “commercial correspondence” might serve as a screen “for espionage” and asked how many of his political opponents could be accused “according to this wonderful prescription.” He ignored the fact that the evidence did not point to espionage at all, and took the prosecutor to task for not having presented a better analysis of the Sumenson account, detailing the source of the money and the recipients.

The point was valid. There obviously were a number of mistakes in the prosecutor’s story, but much had become known. The Justice Department and counter-intelligence knew considerably more than they revealed, and Lenin had no way of knowing if Mme. Sumenson, who was not politically motivated, did not reveal everything under interrogation. Insofar as the prosecution was concerned, an orderly development of the case could have been quite effective. But the investigation was allowed to linger. The order for Lenin’s arrest which was issued, after some delay, on July 19, was not revoked ; it remained in force until he seized power. Actually, however, the case had been dropped by the middle of August. Some of the more illusionary members of the government—especially N.V. Nekrassov, who later joined the Bolsheviks—objected to accusing an authentic revolutionary of high treason. P.N. Pereverzev, the Minister of justice, who authorized the disclosures, was forced to resign. In his place, Kerensky appointed

A.S. Zarudny, who had served as Trotsky's defense lawyer in 1906. Thus, Kerensky took no serious initiative to make justice prevail. He affected criticism of the premature disclosure which had allowed Hanecki to escape arrest. But it was known that Larin had served as a courier between the Petrograd and Stockholm Bolsheviks and nothing was done to get the truth from him.⁽²³⁾ The fact that he was neither a Bolshevik nor a Menshevik apparently provided him with ample political protection.

1 This, together with the undermining of discipline, was the main result of Order No. 1. The issuance of this order against the will of the moderate parties often has been ascribed to German agents, but if there was a diabolic plan behind this event, the planning and tactical ability of a few anonymous German political warriors would have bordered on the miraculous. Still two points seem worth mentioning : the order was due essentially to two persons, Linde and N.D. Sokolov, a shadowy figure who was a cross between Bolshevik and Menshevik. He was a close friend of the Bolshevik Kozlovsky of whom we shall hear more presently. It should be remembered, too, that the order was written for the most part by Sokolov to inhibit the Tsar from throwing troops into the capital and chasing away the revolutionaries. The order fulfilled its purpose of depriving the Tsar of his army. See Tarasoff-Rodionov, *La Révolution de Février 1917* (Paris : Gallimard, 1930), Chapters VII and VIII ; and Smilg-Benario, p. 216ff.

2 Zeman, p. 55f.

3 Browder-Kerensky, *op. cit.*, 111, 1365.

4 This was confirmed by Stepankowski, who also stated that the man's correct name was Yaremenko. The Russian agent posed as a leader of the Ukrainian independence movement and thereby won German confidence quickly. According to other indications, he was a counter-intelligence expert of long standing.

5 Futrell, p. 166.

6 *Ibid.*, p. 171f. Kozlovsky and Hanecki attempted to recruit N.D. Sokolov, who wielded great power among the Mensheviks. Whether they succeeded or not, Kozlovsky had a room in Sokolov's flat which he used "as an accommodation address for most of his correspondence" (Nikitine, p. 167). Sokolov did much to shield Lenin and the Bolsheviks.

7 *Ibid.*, p. 166.

8 According to Scheidemann, Vorovsky was in close contact with Parvus, *op. cit.*, I, 127).

9 According to Futrell, Aschberg's belated admission destroyed this denial by Hanecki (p. 166f.).

10 Three intercepted telegrams between Hanecki and Sumenson contained these phrases : "Nestlé not sent flour. Agitate." "Cable what funds in your hands Nestle." "Cable bank balances then pay Nestle account if possible." (Nikitine, pp. 120f.) Nikitine, a counter intelligence chief, stated that Sumenson was a demi-mondaine and was not employed by a commercial firm (p. 123f.), but this probably was an error.

11 It is also possible that he was a Swedish socialist by that name. The Swedish socialists, as Futrell shows, were very helpful in these transactions.

12 Futrell, p. 167f.

13 Browder-Kerensky, *op .cit.*, III, 1370ff. 1702.

14 Paralyzing fears are an excellent tactical device. Since 1956 the Communists have been using the fear of nuclear war as a psycho-strategic cover for their operations.

15 Browder-Kerensky, III, p. 1374.

16 *Ibid.*, p. 1375.

17 Twenty-nine of these telegrams were published, without dates, by Nikitine, but the French intelligence officer who intercepted them had a considerably larger number. One telegram points to the pressure exerted by and on the Bolsheviks. It reads, "Funds very low cannot assist if really urgent give 500 as last payment pencils huge loss original hopeless instruct Nya Banken cable further 100 thousand." This telegram was sent by Sumenson to Hanecki. The text suggests that the July uprising may have been hampered by low funds. For a general analysis, *see* S.P. Melgunov, *Zolotoy nemetskii klyuch bolshevikov*, Paris, La Maison du Livre Etranger, 1940, pp. 104-116. Melgunov stressed that Hanecki was paying for Sumenson's "imports" and added that according to Beletsky, former Okhrana chief, Sumenson had been known for years to be a German agent. Incidentally, for most of his communications with Petrograd, Hanecki used the diplomatic pouch—the government unwittingly, helped in the conspiracy (Futrell, p. 155).

18 Browder-Kerensky, III, p. 1376. It was also stated that in the early days of the revolution "sums of money (800,000 rubles, 250,000 rubles and other sums) were remitted to Russia from Stockholm through one bank that received orders from Germany" (p. 1375).

19 This is an allusion to the celebrated trial in 1912 of Jacob Beilis, a hapless Jew, on contrived charges of ritual murder. Beilis sought his day in court and was acquitted. It would have been more correct for Lenin to refer to the *Bonnet Rouge* affair that just had broken in France. The Germans financed a radical revolutionary and pacifist paper to undermine French resistance. He could also have cited the case of his old Zimmerwald crony, Robert Grimm, who had been expelled from Russia because he was plotting with Germany to facilitate a separate peace. Grimm was exposed because a telegram of his to Berne was deciphered.

20 Russian counter-intelligence had seized three letters by Lenin to Parvus, presumably of May-June, 1917. (See Nikitine, *op. cit.*, p. 118).

21 Futrell, p. 177f.

22 After the seizure of power the Central Committee refused to appoint Hanecki to be diplomatic representative in Stockholm. Lenin, in a vigorously worded letter, came to his defense without, however, enlightening the comrades about Hanecki's true role (*Leninski Sbornik*, vol. 36, Moscow, 1959, p. 18ff.). Lenin argued that it was not forbidden by any party resolution to work in commercial firms. Hanecki's and Kozlovsky's case was discussed in eight meetings of the Central Committee between April 1917 and February 1918 but the published minutes of these meetings omit these debates (Futrell, p. 174f.). Some debates, presumably, were influenced by M.S. Uritsky who had lived between 1915 and 1917 at Copenhagen and also was connected with Parvus. The whole affair was a replica of the Malinovsky story ; only this time, Hanecki was the accused and not the judge. In any event, Hanecki made a moderately distinguished career under Lenin but in the late 1930's he seems to have fallen victim to Stalin's purges. Subsequently he was rehabilitated.

23 Nikitine, *op. cit.*, p. 117. See also *London Times*, July 20, 1917.

Lenin : The Compulsive Revolutionary

In Hiding

The Bolsheviks were given ample opportunity to cover their tracks. Lenin hid in Stassova's plush apartment (this would have been an obvious place to search) and was given a choice diet—Maria had left instructions to take care of Lenin's sick stomach. On July 18, Lenin stayed with Sverdlov at the apartment of M.L. Salimova, then went to that of V.N. Kayurov and to the flat of N.G. Poletayev, a Duma deputy. The choice of the last two apartments is quite surprising. Finally, he proceeded to the residence of S.Y. Alliluyev⁽¹⁾ and in a secret meeting of party leaders refused to present himself for trial, on the invalid and transparent pretext that he could expect no justice from a "counter-revolutionary government." An innocent man would have seized the opportunity to cleanse his record. This is precisely what Trotsky did.

But obviously Lenin could not take the risk, even though he probably knew that he had little to fear from prosecutor Karinsky.

Not all of the party leaders present knew about Lenin's deals with the Germans. Stalin hardly was privy to these secrets, but he possessed a first-rate conspiratorial nose and argued most strongly against risking a confrontation with the law. Krupskaya asserts that Lenin and Zinovyev, even against Maria's objections, decided to present themselves for trial at the appointed time. Lenin asked Krupskaya to inform Kamenev. As she arose hastily, Lenin checked her with, "Let's say goodbye . . . we may not see each other again."⁽²⁾ They embraced. The tale goes that a few hours later Stalin persuaded Lenin not to appear in court and thus "saved his life." This is a touching but thoroughly untrustworthy story.

In the evening of July 20, the room which the Lenins still occupied in Yelizarov's house was searched ;⁽³⁾ two days later the entire flat was examined and subsequently a third search was made. The searches, however, were incompetent and too late. Lenin slipped out of town on July 22, at 11 P.M., walked for nine kilometers to an outlying railroad station, and quietly traveled to Razliv, near Sestroretsk, where he stayed in the house of the worker N.A. Yemelyanov.

On August 3 Lenin was formally indicted but he made no real effort to locate him (which should have been easy). The Mensheviks, dreading that an investigation might backfire on them, loudly cried "slander," saving the Bolsheviks.

Since May Trotsky had been Lenin's closest collaborator : he was a more forceful orator and clearer thinker than other Bolsheviks, and he possessed more energy and tactical sense. But he had no money and therefore, though he had the most able collaborators, was unable to sustain an effective newspaper.⁽⁴⁾ Formally he and his group had remained independent and, since the government had not implicated him in its accusations, Trotsky remained at liberty. He wrote a cocky letter to the government saying that he shared Lenin's convictions and was as responsible as Lenin for the July events. Why was he not indicted ? For

about two weeks, Trotsky constantly made speeches in which he defended the Bolsheviks and goaded the government. After a long period of this performance, he was arrested. Trotsky—formerly described by Lenin as a “swine” was not afraid to take personal risks.

Once in this period Lenin reacted to a prediction that he soon might be premier by saying, “This wouldn’t be so strange.”⁽⁵⁾ But he was thoroughly dejected.

It seemed to some that Lenin’s career was nearing its end. Fearing that someone might “do him in,” he asked Kamenev, in strict confidence, to edit the manuscript which later was published as *The State and Revolution*. He wanted Kamenev to ensure posthumous publication. “I think it is important” he said, “because Plekhanov and Kautsky are not the only ones who blundered.”

His concealment did not lack its romantic aspects, but it hardly improved his health. He had left the Yemelyanov house and moved into the woods. Lenin, now known as Konstantin Petrovich Ivanov, could be reached by one of Yemelyanov’s children acting as guide. The road led through the village to the seashore, from which point a boat had to be taken. After rowing for half an hour, mostly through sedge, there was another ten-minute walk through swamps before reaching a barn. There “Ivanov” was living, *sans* beard and mustache. Inside the barn a sort of bedroom had been created, but because it was filled with hay there could be no fire, so that it was quite cold at night, even in July and August. The vapors from the swamp were unpleasant and dangerous. Another inconvenience was the difficulty in getting supplies to Lenin. In order to attract little attention, the faithful Shotman alternated with a female comrade, A.N. Tokareva, in bringing things.

In almost complete isolation, it was surprising that Lenin snapped out of his depression by mid-August. He was able to write several articles and work on *State and Revolution*. Yet he feared that the “Bonapartist” phase of the revolution was about to begin. This expectation kept him politically inactive.

On August 8, a party conference convened which allegedly represented about 150,000 party members.⁽⁶⁾ Siefeld attended as a delegate from Odessa. Lenin was honorary president, but the conference was dominated by Stalin. It ratified the formal adherence of the jailed Trotsky and his group to the Bolsheviks. More than any other socialist group, Trotsky's *Mezhrayonka* contributed to the Tsar's overthrow. Trotsky also held strong support from the sailors. His "apparatus" was better organized than Lenin's although Lenin had broader mass support and a stronger propaganda machine. The merging of the two groups was in line with German wishes, for together they created a truly effective insurrectional force.

The conference preached a united front of the internationalists against the defencists, and formulated a hold-the-line resolution which held the seizure of power to be the goal of the revolutionary classes. But what else could it say ? There was a suggestion that socialism could be built up even if there were no proletarian revolution in the West ; this constituted an abandonment of a basic tenet of the creed, and one which fitted German interests. The most visible change was that the slogan advocating "all power to the soviets" was revoked : the soviet had turned strongly against the Bolsheviks. For Lenin, any institution was an instrument of power. If it served his political interests, it was good ; if it did not, it was bad—no organization could have a genuine value for and in itself.

The Bolshevik conference aroused much ire and evoked criticism of the government for not finding Lenin. On August 15 an *ukas* was issued authorizing administrative arrest and deportation of persons dangerous to the defense and internal security of the state and "to the freedom achieved by the revolution." Two days later, another decree threatened with prison terms, of indefinite periods at hard labor, persons guilty of violence with the intent to change the state structure, to sever from Russia any of its parts, to remove the organs of supreme state power, or to prevent the exercise of state authority. Revolution was thus outlawed,

but Lenin could not know that these laws would be invoked only against generals trying to defend their country against the external enemy.

On the face of it, Lenin's legal jeopardy had worsened. There was fear that hunters might inadvertently discover Lenin's hide-out which, for that matter, would become uninhabitable in cold weather. The decision was made to remove Lenin to Finland, but the border was well guarded. Shotman and another Finn, Ejno A. Rakhya, systematically tested all nearby border check points ; they decided that a simple crossing with false papers was too dangerous. It was decided that Lenin should travel as a stoker on a locomotive operated by a friend of Shotman.

One day, allegedly early in September but more likely by the middle of August, Lenin and his party left the barn and walked about six miles through the bush to a railroad station. This walk at night was slightly hazardous ; Yemelyanov, who acted as guide, lost his way. A river had to be crossed and a brush fire caused trouble. At the station, Yemelyanov was arrested as a suspect, but Lenin and Rakhya, who had been hiding in the dark, jumped on the train in the best American hobo tradition. Finally they reached a place near the border at which point they waited till the next evening in the apartment of comrade Kalske. By nightfall, G. Jalawa, the friendly engineer, was ready. Wearing a wig, make-up, and appropriate clothing, Lenin mounted the locomotive and began to toss wood into the fire. The train reached the border check point. When it appeared that the control was strict, the engineer drove the locomotive forward, as though to take water, and put Lenin across.⁽⁷⁾

While Lenin changed roles from stoker to revolutionary, he asked Shotman to return the manuscript of *State and Revolution* which he had entrusted to him. A car was waiting to carry Lenin to a safe apartment. The next day he traveled to Lakhti, where he remained for two days. Then he moved to the village of Zhalkala, to the home of the parents of the very young and pretty Lidia



P. Parviainen, Rakhya's wife. There he is said to have stayed for about ten days and to have enjoyed the home-made sweets. Finally, "Constantin Petrovich Ivanov" disguised himself as a pastor and moved to Helsinki, the Finnish capital, where he stayed with a comrade, Kustaa Rowio who, since the February revolution, had been in charge of the city police ! Rowio had a fine Marxist library ; Lenin began to work. During one night (we do not know exactly when), he stayed in the house of Karl Wiik, who had been deeply involved in the "northern underground." There Lenin read Jules Michelet's account of the terror in the French Revolution.⁽⁸⁾

The Germans, meanwhile, were not satisfied with Lenin's performance and were hesitating. They wanted the Bolsheviks to concentrate more on organizing and less on agitating. For a while the Germans attempted to pull additional socialist groups into their net and through an international conference at Stockholm (September 5-12, 1917) sought to enhance socialist "unity." But this tactic failed, partly because of Bolshevik sabotage and partly because the moderate socialists wavered.

By the middle of August the military joined conservative and middle-of-the-road politicians to map out a program of restoring order in Russia. Rumors of an impending military coup were thickening.

Early in September, a conflict pitted the government against the high command. The military, under General Lavr Kornilov, attempted to seize control.⁽⁹⁾ The frightened socialists rallied around the soviet. The Bolsheviks, who had recently treated the soviet, the Mensheviks, and the Social Revolutionaries as traitors, reversed themselves and joined the socialist "counter-revolutionaries" in opposition to the military counter-revolutionaries. Suddenly there occurred a resurgence of the cry, "All power to the soviet !"

No one bothered to ask Lenin's advice. However, three days after the united front had been improvised, Lenin provided tactical advice : the Bolsheviks should join with the other socialists in fighting Kornilov but

should not support the government. This was a typical Lenin prescription on the subject of how to swim without getting wet.

The Bolsheviks exploited the opportunity to enlarge their militant organization and pressed forward to obtain the weapons which the government was distributing. After Kornilov was defeated (largely through railroad strikes and sabotage), the Bolsheviks ignored the government's request to return the weapons. The Kornilov affair provided the Bolsheviks with an unexpected gain, for it discredited most of the parties that were represented in both the government and in the soviet.

For the first time in the incessant voting exercised to keep the soviet "representative" of public opinion, Petrograd factory workers during September returned a slim Bolshevik majority. In the Petrograd soviet the military deputies sided with the Bolsheviks. The Bolsheviks also gained a majority in the Moscow soviet, and early in October won an election in the Moscow district. This major reversal occurred at a moment when practically all of the ranking Bolshevik leaders were in prison or in hiding. A few days later, partly as a result of this switch, Trotsky was released from jail and elected president of the Petrograd soviet. The government instituted a purge of military officers, but by now it lacked any real power. A front organization (the Committee for the People's Struggle Against Counter-revolution) insisted upon the release of all those who had been "unjustly" accused. Virtually all the perpetrators of the July uprising, including Trotsky, were released outright or set free on bail. The amount set for bail was no less than 8,000 rubles for the main defendants, but the Central Committee was able to pay.⁽¹⁰⁾ Chaos was spreading.

On September 13 the Petrograd soviet adopted a resolution calling for a cabinet which would be responsible to the soviet. The next day Lenin wrote an article, entitled "Compromises,"⁽¹¹⁾ advocating all power to the soviets and a government of Social Revolutionaries and Mensheviks responsible to the soviets. He went on to say that, if the new

government were to guarantee full freedom of propaganda under conditions of real and complete democracy, there would be a possibility of “peaceful progress of the revolution” and of a “peaceful solution of the party strife within the soviets.” Such a possibility occurs only extremely rarely in history, Lenin added, and the present opportunity may last for only “a few days, or for a week or two,” but it still would be “extremely valuable” to utilize the unexpected chance. Zinovyev had stated more clearly a few days earlier, in an article *What Not To Do*, that an insurrectional attempt would herald the fate of the Paris Commune for the revolution.

But on September 16 Lenin added in a postscript that the proposal for a compromise was “already too late” and asserted that Kerensky was about to “consolidate his position with the help of the bourgeoisie.” There seemed to be no basis for this statement—no significant political change had occurred to invalidate Lenin’s compromise proposal. But Lenin’s thinking had for some reason suddenly taken a dramatic turn. Why ?

1 Alliluyev was Stalin’s father-in-law.

2 Krupskaya, p. 366. Walter, p. 335, relates that Stassova reported a rumor according to which evidence had been found in the police archives that Lenin was an *agent provocateur*. Was this perhaps the documentation on “Lenin II” ?

3 Shub, p. 216.

4 Trotsky had been associated with the *Mezhrayonka* which presumably was supported before March, 1917, by Parvus ; at that time, Trotsky was living in France, Spain, and the United States.

5 Shotman, *op. cit.*, p. 396.

6 This figure probably should be much smaller since party membership was down significantly. The best evidence is that the 100,000 mark was reached only late in 1917. It is also asserted that the Bolsheviks were now publishing forty papers, printing 1,500,000 issues *per week*. (*Istoricheskii Arkhiv* (1955), No. 5, p. 201). This means that the *tirage* of the average paper was

very small and that organized party membership must be counted merely in the tens of thousands. *See also* Schapiro, *Origin*, p. 167.

7 For more details, see Shotman, pp. 400-411.

8 Futrell, p. 18.

9 The attempts by the right to restore an orderly regime in Russia prove that, to make revolutions or counter-revolutions, money is not enough. One group collected four million rubles but they did not know how to spend the money and spent only about 500,000 rubles for ineffectual propaganda. A maximum of 800,000 rubles was given to Kornilov for operations to support his military action. (Actually, the amount turned over may have been far less.) Hence there was, in orders of magnitude, just as much money available to this group as to the Germans. But the ingredients of leadership, organization, and purpose were lacking. Money is indeed just one of the prerequisites of revolution. Incidentally, the planners of the counter-coup had intelligence that the Bolsheviks were planning another demonstration or uprising by September 10. This was countermanded. (The change may have been connected with Lenin's departure for Finland.) Thereupon, the military decided to stage a "Bolshevik" coup themselves, and 100,000 rubles were allotted. By the time 26,000 rubles were spent, a high ranking general vetoed the scheme. (Browder-Kerensky, *op. cit.*, III, 1527-1542.)

10 Yelena D. Stassova, *Stranitsy zhizni i borby* (Moscow : Gospolitizdat, 1957), p. 99.

11 *Selected Works*, Vol. VI. pp. 208-214.

The Armed Uprising

Through Wiik Lenin resumed contact with Hanecki in Stockholm. He wrote him an unofficial letter saying he could not consult with the Central Committee, “nor even get in touch with them.” Yet, in the same paragraph he added that he would forward a report from Stockholm to the Central Committee.

The point of this Aesopian letter was that the comrades in Stockholm should take action themselves. The Central Committee “cannot help,” hence, how are money affairs ? Did they manage to collect money “through the Swedish left ?” Lenin hinted that Karl Moor might provide a source of funds, or since the old channels were clogged, could serve as a cover man for further money “collections.” Lenin may also have feared that the German link was broken, and wanted Moor to reestablish relations. Since his letter might have been intercepted, Lenin observed the rules of conspiracy. He asked : “But what is Moor like ? Has it been completely and absolutely proven that he is honest ? Has he never had any direct, or indirect hobnobbing with German social imperialists ?” Of course, Lenin had known Moor for years. (Note that Lenin did not ask whether Moor had connections with the German government but merely professed interest in his associations with the German Social Democratic party.⁽¹⁾)

Lenin’s liaison men must have acted quickly. On September 29, 1917, the German Foreign Office informed the high command that their military operations were being substantially bolstered by “intensive undermining activities inside Russia on the part of the Foreign Ministry. . . . The Bolshevik movement could never have attained the scale of the influence which it has today without our continual support. There is every indication that the movement will continue to grow.”⁽²⁾ In other words, the Bolsheviks were receiving help again.

The telegram further said that Russia “is only barely held together by English agents,” and added that the English influence depended upon rail communications through Finland. The message reported : “The preparations for the Finnish rising are . . . busily underway and are being supported to a considerable extent.” Lenin was in Finland at that time.

For a number of reasons, the Foreign Office proposed the occupation of the Aaland Isles. The operation would have to be accomplished in the first half of November in order to improve in an “eminently important manner” the German “position in the West and the North.” This action would affect “the whole outcome of the war.” Since the occupation of the Aalands was not feasible, the high command proposed instead—over the signature of General Erich Ludendorff—to continue the revolutionizing of Russia. The plan gave thanks to the Foreign Office for the generous financial support it had extended to this activity. (Note the timing on which the Foreign Office insisted : “first half of November.”)

Lenin had changed his mind on September 16. But he procrastinated for another nine days. On September 24, Ludendorff, after considering the lessons of the Kornilov uprising, expressed the fear that another military coup might succeed. In order to forestall this danger, he asked the Foreign Office to apply more radical measures. On September 25, Lenin notified the Central Committee that the current strategy would have to be modified : the Bolsheviks should assume state power. It is possible that he had learned that the Germans were again backing him.

Lenin took two days to write his message. The thoughts and suggestions reflected his entire experience of twenty-four years. He stated that the Bolsheviks were gaining the majority in Petrograd and Moscow, and that it was time to replace speech-making with action. “History will not forgive us if we do not assume power now. . . . We will win absolutely and unquestionably.”⁽³⁾ He felt that an uprising was essential but that it should be carefully prepared. Lenin outlined his concept of insurrection

as an art, offered suggestions concerning organization and tactics, and emphasized that further delays were inadmissible.

The letter horrified the Central Committee. Kamenev suggested that Lenin's proposal be rejected. It was decided to burn the letter, but a vote of six to four with six abstentions resolved to preserve a copy for the party archives.

As had often occurred before, Lenin was out of step with his contemporaries ; but in this instance he was in step with history. Chaos was gaining the upper hand. During September agrarian disorders erupted throughout the countryside and an increasingly intense peasant civil war was underway. Inflation was rampant and the value of the ruble declined precipitously. (There were now three types in circulation.) Labor productivity had declined by one third or more. Production of many key commodities was at a virtual standstill, and with about 1500 locomotives out of order, transport bottlenecks were disrupting the distribution system. Food was scarce, especially in the army. The government, in the midst of a rapidly increasing deficit, was unable to distribute the social benefits it had promised. There were outbursts in the Urals and Siberia and rebellions by independence movements in Turkestan and the Caucasus. The situation in Finland gradually became unmanageable. On October 1, 1917, Ludendorff issued a new directive on front propaganda ; "fraternization" was immediately stepped up. The Russian government displayed utter impotence, while running what was alleged, even by Lenin, to be the freest democracy in the world.

Perturbed by the Central Committee's failure to acknowledge his letter, Lenin concerned himself with the technical aspects of the insurrection. He pondered the possible means of employing the Baltic fleet, the Kronstadt garrison, and the troops stationed in Finland.

The Central Committee continued on its conciliatory course. The Bolsheviks attended a democratic conference which resolved to establish a "pre-parliament." The Bolsheviks voted to join with the other parties

in participating in that body. Lenin was furious and demanded that the conference and the pre-parliament be boycotted. Trotsky and Stalin supported him, but the conciliators held the majority.

Lenin was impatient ; he departed from Helsingfors for Vyborg. On the pretext that the border crossing was very dangerous, the Central Committee forbade Lenin to return to Petrograd. Shotman was dispatched to intercept Lenin and inform him that his return to Russia had been “forbidden” by the party.⁽⁴⁾ Strangely enough, although he was infuriated, Lenin not only obeyed this order but apparently did not protest it. However, one source who should be knowledgeable asserts that Lenin traveled to Petrograd on Friday, October 5.⁽⁵⁾

Lenin’s anger increased when he noted that the “central organ,” then edited by Stalin, was not including his criticism of party tactics. On October 12, he wrote to the Central Committee that he recognized the “subtle hint of gagging me and of proposing that I retire.” He continued, “I am compelled to tender my resignation from the Central Committee ... leaving myself freedom of propaganda in the lower ranks of the party and at the party congress It is my deepest conviction that if we . . . let the present moment pass, we shall ruin the revolution.”⁽⁶⁾ The party leaders “conciliated” and decided to quit the pre-parliament.

The current dispute concerned the feasibility of awaiting the opening of the Congress of Soviets—in which the Bolsheviks might gain influence and perhaps a majority—before solving the question of a rising. Lenin considered the discussion “a childish play of formality” and insisted upon immediate action.

On October 16 the Central Committee “approved” Lenin’s move to Petrograd ; he had not asked for such consent. This act implies that the Bolsheviks were telling him not to stand at a distance and preach, but to prepare the uprising himself—and to do so at the locale of danger.

Lenin wrote another letter on October 20 demanding immediate insurrection ; he submitted a detailed tactical program. In the press he

published an article asserting that the “third” period of the world revolution was beginning. He interpreted the signs as indicating an incipient uprising in Germany. He wrote, “The crisis is here. The future of the Russian revolution is at stake. The future of the international workers’ revolution for socialism is at stake.”

The state of affairs in Russia can be gauged by Lenin’s brazenness in announcing his intentions openly. But the Central Committee still was not replying to his communications ; he again offered his resignation. By October 20 Lenin recognized that he could not accomplish his objectives by remaining in Finland. This time, a convenient vacation at the critical moment would mean the end of his political career. Again posing as stoker on the locomotive, he slipped into Petrograd, hiding in the apartment of Marguerite Fofanova, a female party member. Party writers have attempted to suggest that this was a poor worker’s apartment in a proletarian quarter,⁽⁷⁾ but Fofanova was an agronomist, and the apartment, which was situated on a broad thoroughfare, was large and spacious. The apartment building stood next to a house with garden which formed an approximate border between a district of workers’ dwellings and a suburban villa development. In October, “the family, including the servant” still were “in the country, where they had gone for the summer,” Krupskaya related.⁽⁸⁾ Yet Marguerite Fofanova indicated that she had been told in August to have her apartment ready and that her sister took the Fofanova children to their grandparents in Ufa province in order to leave the apartment free.

Marguerite Fofanova’s version of the date of Lenin’s arrival in Petrograd is doubtful : it does not correspond with other reports. More significantly, Fofanova reported that Lenin was chiefly concerned with the agrarian question ; she claimed that while he lived at her apartment the literary argument with the party was over. This story would put his arrival in the middle rather than the early part of October. Fofanova probably is correct in remembering that Lenin arrived on a Friday afternoon ; she has a vivid recollection of his staying a long time. If the arrival date of October 5 is excluded as too early, and if Lenin appeared

on a Friday, he may have appeared on October 12 or October 19 (rather than October 20). The October 12 date is the most plausible. Thus, Lenin stayed at least eighteen, and perhaps twenty-five, days at Marguerite Fofanova's apartment.

There is an eerie quality about this interlude. Lenin had fought a bitter struggle with his own party and he was preparing a violent uprising which might have entailed his own death. There was chaos and trouble all around. Yet here he was, by force of circumstances, on a little island of peace, a Robinson Crusoe with a girl Friday who provided him with shelter and food, and who acted as his courier.

Marguerite Vasilyevna Fofanova (born in 1883) was completing the last year of her studies in agronomy. Apparently an alert and intelligent girl, there is no doubt that there existed a close mental rapport between her and Lenin. Though they had not met previous to his arrival at her apartment, Lenin soon talked to her confidentially about his tactics in dealing with the peasants and, even more significantly, discussed with her the top secret correspondence he received from Zinovyev. She reported that Lenin suffered from insomnia and displayed irritability and hastiness. She also recounted that Krupskaya visited her husband on the first day of Lenin's arrival and again on October 31, when she "stayed with us overnight." The next morning Krupskaya came to Marguerite's room and inquired about possible treatment for Volodya's insomnia. Fofanova's chronicle hints that she and Lenin kept in contact during the following years and that their letters were often about books, and sometimes discussing Goethe's *Faust*, and opera. It is noteworthy that Communist historians describe this interlude as lasting only a mere two or three days.

Lenin, at forty-seven, was confined for three weeks with a young woman to whom he was attracted. Normally, the inference would be plain, but Lenin might not have been tempted. Still, the tone of Fofanova's reminiscences and also the flavor of Krupskaya's recollection do suggest a somewhat intimate bond. Psychologically, the matter is of more than

passing interest : this was the peak of Lenin's life, the only time when he threw himself into the midst of the fray. Perhaps he did feel the inner need to prove himself as the great conqueror during the Indian summer of his emotional life. All that is definitely known is that during these climactic days, Lenin was in close contact *only* with Fofanova, a woman thirteen years younger than he. It would be unreasonable to assume that her influence was trivial.

After Lenin had focussed upon the uprising as a military operation, he became anxious to broaden his political base. He sent Marguerite to obtain for him back numbers of *Krestyanskiye Izvestiya*, the organ of the peasant soviet, in which the left Social Revolutionaries were playing the radical role. Many of their leaders had returned to Russia through Germany. Lenin's political strategy was designed to neutralize the Mensheviks in order to confuse public opinion and to seek a temporary alliance with the leftist Social Revolutionaries in order to obtain peasant support. Winning the good will of this revolutionary group presented a problem. The Bolsheviks had no convincing agrarian program. Lenin studied the copies of *Krestyanskiye Izvestiya* for two full days, working late into the night. After he had read thoroughly the articles and speeches of left Social Revolutionaries, he found a "mandate" which local peasant electors had produced. Lenin showed the paper to Marguerite, saying, "Here's a ready-made agreement with the left Social Revolutionaries. . . . We shall use [this mandate] as the basis for our law concerning the land and see if the left Social Revolutionaries dare to reject it."⁽⁹⁾

Lenin carried out the plan and the left Social Revolutionaries behaved as he anticipated. Lenin abandoned, temporarily, the notion of the large farm run like a factory and advocated partition of the land. In order to achieve power, he promised the peasants exactly what *they* wanted, and thus was empowered to accomplish, later, what *he* wanted. This procedure is offensive to the ideologist, but displays great tactical skill.

On October 21 Lenin turned to a purely military argumentation. He said, “Only the immediate movement of the Baltic fleet, of the Finnish troops, of Reval and Kronstadt . . . is capable of saving the Russian and the world revolution. . . . Delay means death.”⁽¹⁰⁾ Two days later he wrote to Ivan T. Smilga, who controlled the Bolshevik units within the forces stationed in Finland, telling him to be ready within approximately two weeks. Lenin later asked Podvoisky to brief him on the military units at Petrograd which might be sympathetic to the Bolsheviks.

On October 22, Trotsky, skillfully exploiting the unexpected announcement by the government that the Petrograd garrison no longer would be exempted from front duty, suggested to the soviet the establishment of a military-revolutionary committee to supervise military moves. The moderates were unconcerned and the soldiers, who were anxious to avoid the discomforts of the trenches, applauded. Trotsky appointed a committee consisting of Bolsheviks and one member of the left Social Revolutionaries. This representative was a boy of eighteen.

Trotsky, upon announcing that all orders to the garrison would have to be approved by his committee, dispatched committee representatives to the units. This was the decisive military move :⁽¹¹⁾ his commissars had the “legal” and moral power to prevent the government from using the garrison against the Bolsheviks and, in some instances, the commissars succeeded in switching the units to Trotsky’s command.

At this point Lenin could not tolerate his isolation any longer. On October 23, (still wearing his wig) he participated in a ten-hour meeting of the Central Committee held in Petrograd. The meeting was attended by only twelve members and took place in the apartment of N.N. Sukhanov, a Menshevik whose absence had been contrived by his Bolshevik wife. Lenin argued, entirely fictitiously, that the Entente was going to make a separate peace with Germany and that the result would be the crushing of the revolution. He insisted that if the Bolsheviks took control, the West would follow suit. Kamenev and Zinovyev argued

with him, but Lenin had a more forceful personality and was in a violent state. He persuaded the Central Committee to accept the uprising on the grounds (as they stated mendaciously in their resolution) that the government was about to deliver Petrograd to the Germans.⁽¹²⁾ Thus, the uprising was accepted in principle, but the persons to whom the technical preparations were entrusted were unsure about what steps to take. One leading Bolshevik thought that, although lengthy preparation was required, the uprising eventually would take place, perhaps within a year.

Zinovyev and Kamenev, who had voted against the resolution deciding upon the insurrection, wrote a secret letter to party committees warning against uprising and revolutionary war.⁽¹³⁾ The Bolsheviks, though they were increasing in mass strength, still did not have the majority. Hence they were unwilling “to stake on one card not only the fate of our party, but also the fate of the Russian and international revolution.” Not realizing that Lenin and Trotsky were planning to use military detachments, in addition to party forces, the two oppositionists proposed to make every effort to win electorally in an attempt to establish a radical coalition government which the Bolsheviks could dominate.

German agents were busy buying, almost openly, machine guns and rifles from delinquent soldiers. The weapons were distributed to the Bolshevik Red guards. Such activities had been occurring for several weeks.

At that time, foreign currency was the preferred tender in Russia. The German Minister in Berne had been requested to procure Swiss francs without revealing the involvement of the legation. This operation was accomplished. On October 25, 1917, Diego von Bergen, who controlled political warfare in the Wilhelmstrasse, and who had been masterminding the revolutionizing of Russia,⁽¹⁴⁾ before Dr. Jordan, one of his aides in the Russian business, handed a sealed envelope to Herr Sennefelder, a courier. Sennefelder signed a receipt and it was noted that he did not have knowledge of the contents of the sealed envelope

(100,000 francs) but would transmit the packet instantly to the *Vertrauensmann* (confidential agent). It was perhaps not a very large sum but the Swiss franc was valuable in inflation-ridden Russia.

In Petrograd, however, matters did not advance. On October 29, a Central Committee meeting was attended by representatives from the Petrograd Bolshevik organizations. Lenin, who briefly emerged from hiding, called for an immediate insurrection and managed to have the dissenting voices overruled.

Suddenly, the struggle within the Central Committee broke into open print. There had been a leak and Kamenev and Zinovyev immediately denied that a day had been fixed for an uprising. Furious about the leak Lenin attacked his opponents in three articles. Without mentioning names, Zinovyev replied. Stalin published a mollifying note. Kamenev, writing in Gorky's paper, strongly opposed the uprising. Lenin demanded the expulsion of Zinovyev and Kamenev from the party. Stalin was determined to preserve unity, but Kamenev resigned. An anti-Bolshevik newspaper published the Bolshevik operational plan, whereupon Trotsky and his friends launched deceptive rumors to discredit the new leak. But the disorganization of the government had gone too far. Even the disclosure that the Bolsheviks were about to initiate an insurrection did not stimulate effective counter-actions.

On November 3, a party council was convened. Theoretically such a council consisted of the Central Committee and the leading party functionaries. If a genuine council with the appropriate membership had been convened, the uprising probably would have been cancelled. Hence, Lenin resorted to one of his old tricks : the participants were not invited *ex officio* but were selected by Sverdlov, Shotman, and Rakhya's brother ; Stalin later added two or three names. Those who were invited were notified by trusted persons like Shotman—or not notified if the wrong name had slipped on the list. In the end, twenty-five persons assembled in the municipal building of the Vyborg district, which was close to Lenin's hiding place. Lenin talked for two hours, then a long

debate followed. Many of the participants withdrew to adjoining rooms to nap. By seven the next morning Lenin's resolution to seize state power was accepted by a vote of nineteen to two, with four voters abstaining. The council had been well selected.

November 4 was a holiday (the Day of the Soviet), complete with street demonstrations, manifestations, and mass meetings. The Bolsheviks used the opportunity to hold trial maneuvers, concealing this bold operation by mingling their troops with the demonstrators and strollers.⁽¹⁵⁾ On November 5 Trotsky persuaded the soldiers of Peter-Paul Fortress to change sides ; this daring coup gave the Bolsheviks about 20,000 rifles and a topographical position commanding the capital. On the evening of Tuesday, November 6, the Bolshevik leaders assembled in their Petrograd headquarters. Lenin wrote : "The matter must absolutely be decided this evening or tonight. History will not forgive delay by revolutionists who could be victorious today (and will surely be victorious today) ; while they risk losing much tomorrow, they risk losing all The government is tottering, we must deal it the death blow at any cost."

The government, which expected the rising to occur on the next day, was positioning guards on the Neva Bridges. Lenin was warned that if the bridges were raised, the city would be divided and the uprising could be suppressed piecemeal. Lenin sent Marguerite with a note to the Vyborg headquarters, his liaison point, and called for immediate action. She was told that Lenin should stay in hiding. Lenin sent her back. She returned with the same answer and apparently tried to convince Lenin to exercise caution. But he sent her off for a third time saying, "Ask them . . . what they are afraid of ? . . . Do they have a hundred reliable soldiers . . . with rifles ? I don't need more for my protection." The Vyborg committee denied Lenin for the third time during the night.

When Marguerite returned to the apartment, Lenin had gone. On the table there was an unfinished dinner. A note was fastened to his napkin. It read, "I went where you did not want me to go. *Au revoir*, Ilyich."

Marguerite fell into her bed. Suddenly, the doorbell rang and Marguerite saw Krupskaya standing there. Fofanova told her through the closed door that Lenin had gone to the Smolny.⁽¹⁶⁾ Krupskaya returned to the Vyborg committee.

Lenin had good reason to leave. He was worried that his comrades might hesitate or draw back and feared that the bridges might be raised after all. But he did not go alone : he met Ejno Rakhya who had appeared suddenly, perhaps with an order to keep Lenin away, and ended by going with Lenin, who could no longer be restrained. Armed with false papers, Lenin put a bandage over his face as though he had a toothache and donned an old cap. At eight in the evening, accompanied by Rakhya acting as his bodyguard, Lenin began his trek. A streetcar took them a good part of the way ; during the rest of the distance they walked and were stopped twice. When Lenin reached headquarters in the Smolny Institute, the guard did not recognize him and he was forced to sneak into the house. Everything went according to his fondest hopes. The order to rise had been issued hours before, the telegraph agency already had been seized, and the insurrection was in full swing.

Now, when for the first time in his life Lenin had moved to the battlefield himself, he occupied himself with drafting proclamations and statements. Fully convinced that his words were as necessary as bullets and shells, he worked until he was utterly exhausted. He interfered with military operations to a point where Podvoisky, who was acting as chief of staff, became furious and resigned. Lenin ordered him to continue if he did not wish to be shot. Podvoisky wrote later that at that moment, “I felt for the first time that we had a dictatorship.”⁽¹⁷⁾

The Smolny was brilliantly lighted. Couriers came in rapid succession to receive instructions, the telephone worked perfectly, girls were sorting incoming telegrams and typing order.⁽¹⁸⁾ The house was protected by a field gun, machine guns, and armored cars. The Bolsheviks did not even erect barricades. There was no government interference.

Rarely, if ever, had the headquarters of an uprising functioned so openly. This was possible because of the strong influence Trotsky's military revolutionary committee exerted upon most units of the Petrograd garrison. The insurgents claimed that they were simply defending the garrison and the democratic regime against the counter-revolution.⁽¹⁹⁾ The government was relying upon the Cossack regiments, but the Cossacks distrusted Kerensky and were unwilling to fight without infantry support. They decided to spend the night discussing politics and saddling their horses.⁽²⁰⁾ The City Commander took an ambiguous attitude, displaying no energy whatever, and soon disappeared. The Minister of War, to whom the city commander reported directly, had been relieved of his duties.⁽²¹⁾

But was there really an uprising ? The workers had remained on their jobs and there were no mass strikes—not even workers in the streets. The Red guards, few in number, played an insignificant role ; some detachments were mainly composed of Chinese laborers, released prisoners of war, and unemployed Letts. The ultimately decisive factor was the landing of 2,000 or 3,000 Kronstadt sailors and the demonstration by seven warships. These forces participated on their own initiative, not because they had been called from Smolny headquarters.

The fall of the government was announced prematurely. At ten in the morning of November 7 Lenin issued a proclamation about the change of government and, again prematurely, claimed that power was in the hands of the soviets. He stated, “Here is the cause for which the people fought : immediate peace offer on democratic principles ; abolition of land ownership by landowners ; workers’ control of production and creation of a soviet government.”⁽²²⁾

Lenin did not remind Russia that the uprising contradicted Engels’ declaration of 1895 which read, “The time has passed for revolutions to be accomplished through the sudden seizure of power by small minorities at the head of unconscious masses.”⁽²³⁾

Later in the day, four insurgent battleships were in operation in the Neva estuary and 1,500 sailors arrived by train from Helsingfors. Sufficient troops were available to lay siege to the winter palace, the seat of the government. As the Bolsheviks were massing, the government forces disappeared. At six that evening, Gregory I. Chudnovsky, a former assistant to Parvus, asked the government to surrender.⁽²⁴⁾ Lenin became impatient about eight ! He decided to speak to the All-Russian soviet as soon as the government had been deposed. Between nine and ten o'clock there occurred desultory shooting and sailors penetrated the palace through a back door that conveniently was left open. About eleven, the guns of Peter-Paul Fortress fired a few shots, achieving two hits. The light cruiser Aurora fired a blank shell. At two in the morning of November 8, Chudnovsky negotiated the withdrawal of the troops who were "defending" the palace. After the defenders had departed, the palace was taken by "assault."

The Petrograd insurrection could have been easily suppressed by one or two front divisions. Kerensky issued the requisite orders but before action was taken the orders were countermanded by General V.A. Cheremisov, commander of the northern front, who was acting in close liaison with the military revolutionary committee of his headquarters in Pskov.⁽²⁵⁾ Cheremisov, a political careerist, behaved more radically than the radicals : his personal ambitions made him thoroughly unreliable. He justified his action by claiming that the task of the army was to hold the positions currently occupied and not to concern itself with the political struggle at Petrograd. (The most interesting aspect of this story is that late in 1915 or early 1916 Cheremisov was involved in an affair of German espionage.⁽²⁶⁾ He maneuvered to become commander-in-chief under Lenin but found he betrayed in vain : Lenin did not want him.)

On November 8, 1917, Riezler asked Berlin for two million in war bonds.⁽²⁷⁾ He also asked for Jansson, whom he needed urgently, On the following day, the Wilhelmstrasse requested fifteen million marks for political propaganda in Russia. On November 15, Vorovskyl the

Bolshevik contact man in Stockholm, sent a telegram to an agent in Switzerland (probably Moor) who was organizing the transfer of German money to the party in Russia : “Please fulfill your promise immediately. We have committed ourselves on this basis.” He added, “Great demands are being made on us.”⁽²⁸⁾

On November 10, one million rubles were on their way. Riezler was informed, by means of an ultra-secret code, that the balance would follow shortly and that more was available.⁽²⁹⁾ Insurrections can be less costly than the retention of power.⁽³⁰⁾ The German military elatedly told the foreign office on November 9 that the victory of the soviets was in the German interest.

1 The editors of Lenin’s *Sochineniya* (3rd edition, XXIV, 365) asserted that on October 7 the Central Committee declined a money offer by Moor because it was not feasible to check the real source of these funds. There may have been such a vote, especially since most members of the Central Committee were left in the dark about these affairs ... but the funds were hardly declined.

2 Zeman, p. 70.

3 *Selected Works*, Vol. VI, p. 217.

4 Shotman, *op. cit.*, p. 415. For a biography of Shotman, see *Istariokeskii Arkhiv* (1960), No. 2, p. 34.

5 M.V. Fofanova, “Posledneye podpolye V.I. Lenina,” *Istoricheskii Arkhiv* (1956), No. 4, pp. 166-172.

6 *Sochineniya*, 4th ed., Vol. 26, p. 61f.

7 Krupskaya, *op. cit.*, p. 373.

8 *Ibid.*

9 Krupskaya, *op. cit.*, p. 390f.

10 *Selected Works*, Vol. VI, p. 302.

11 For further details, see my *A Century of Conflict* (Chicago : Regnery, 1953), pp. 62-66.

12 Lenin, *Sochineniya*, 4th ed., Vol. 26, p. 157f.

13 Text of the letter in Bunyan and Fisher, pp. 59-62. *See also* Lenin, *Selected Works*, Vol. VI, pp. 325, 329ff.

14 Zeman, p. IX.

15 Curzio Malaparte, *Tecnica del Colpo di Stato* (Milan, Bompiani : 1948), p. 117f.; James Mavor, *The Russian Revolution* (London : Allen and Unwin, 1928), p. 147f.

16 Fofanova, "Ilitch à la veille d'Octobre 1917", *L'ennemi tel qu'il fut*, Vol. I, p. 732.

17 Podvoisky, "Les journées d'Octobre," *ibid.*, p. 752.

18 The government had disconnected the telephone but the Bolsheviks had seized the central switchboard and reestablished service.

19 For an example—the line taken by Gorky's *Novaya Zhizn*—see *Novy Zhurnal*, No. 69, New York, 1961, pp. 199.

20 Serge Oldenbourg, *Le coup d'état bolcheviste, 20 octobre-3 décembre 1917*, Paris, Payot, 1929, p. 154ff.

21 The Minister of War, A.I. Verkhovsky, was a socialist general who, on November 2, had openly called for separate peace. There were over ten million men in the army, of whom five million were fighters, but two million could not be fed ; in addition, there were two million deserters. Verkhovsky had changed his line without consulting the government and was furloughed. The impression is that he changed when he recognized that the government was hopeless. Verkhovsky had been assistant military attaché at Belgrad during 1914 and probably played a minor role in the Serb-Russian intelligence arrangements which led to the assassination of the Austrian crown prince. He later served in the Red Army.

22 *Sochineniya*, 4th ed., Vol. 26, p. 207.

23 Marx and Engels, *Werke*, Vol. 7, p. 523.

24 According to an Okhrana report of February 2, 1916, Chudnovsky had then resigned from Parvus' organization and wanted to go to London. He later came to the United States and returned to Russia with Trotsky. It is possible that he was an intermediary between Trotsky and Parvus.

25 The food situation in the army had become critical. Deliveries during October were down by one-third, partly due to troubles with the railroads. Stocks were down to a two to three day supply. The situation in Cheremisov's command was so "catastrophic" that even the baking of bread had stopped. (Browder-Kerensky, *op. cit.*, 11, 651, 657.) For further details, see my *A Century of Conflict*, p. 72f.

26 Browder-Kerensky, *op. cit.*, 111, 1526, 1804 ; *See also* W.S. Woytinski, *Stormy Passage* (New York : Vanguard, 1961), pp. 355, 374 and Mikhail Bonch-Bruyevich, *op. cit.*, p. 92ff. Bonch-Bruyevich added that he should have been relieved of his post and, at best, retired, but someone helped the “dear fellow.” He was promoted and given command of an infantry division. He owed his later promotions to Kerensky, whom he betrayed.

27 War bonds had held their value better than ruble banknotes, whose value had dropped to about one-third of parity. The telegram (Zeman, p. 72) did not specify the currency, but obviously rubles were requested.

28 Zeman, p. 85.

29 *Ibid.*, p. 79.

30 On November 28, Berlin wired Romberg that the Petrograd government was in financial difficulties ; hence it was desirable to send money. Zeman, pp. 75 and 93.

Lenin : The Compulsive Revolutionary

Chief of Government

The term “seizure of power” aptly describes what had happened : there was no insurrection, for the democratic government had become utterly impotent, so that the Bolsheviks simply took possession of the power that no one claimed. Lenin’s critics contended that forceful seizure was unnecessary and that the Bolsheviks possibly could have assumed power by democratic means. But the elections which were soon held proved that the Bolsheviks had no chance of winning a majority. The Bolsheviks did not merely aim at ministerial chairs ; their goal was to establish a dictatorship. This could be attained only through force ; that the operation entailed few risks was their sheer good fortune. The application of force created the myth of the October revolution : it was *this* important tale that provided bolshevism with its world-wide significance and established Lenin as a first-rank leader. Lenin’s mystical faith in force and violence was better attuned to the irrationality of the historical process than the “reasonableness” of those who hoped

that the revolution would evolve naturally and needed not to be artificially executed.

On November 7 at 10:45 P.M. the Second All-Russian Soviet Congress was called to order while the winter palace still was under siege. The opening of the session was delayed to provide Lenin time to speak. Since Lenin's opponents had left the soviet, the Bolsheviks functioned as the majority party.

The Presidium consisted of fourteen Bolsheviks and seven left Social Revolutionaries who occupied the seats vacated by right Social Revolutionaries. The Kronstadt sailors who participated in the coup were mostly left Social Revolutionaries and anarchists. The left-wing Mensheviks also sat in this rump congress along with a single Ukrainian socialist. Lenin could have made his victory appearance by three in the morning after the fall of the palace, but he did not appear. Lenin was too exhausted. He went to the home of Bonch-Bruyevich, could not fall asleep, and worked on the land decree.⁽¹⁾ The soviet waited until six o'clock and then adjourned.

Later in the morning Lenin delivered his victory speech. He claimed that the old state apparatus would be demolished. A new soviet government would be created without the bourgeoisie. Lenin's government would report to the soviet. The third Russian revolution would bring the victory of socialism, but the liquidation of the war was the immediate task. The international proletariat would help the Russian proletariat. The second task was to expropriate agrarian property. (In 1921, Lenin was to explain to the Third Congress of the Communist International that the "masses" wanted peace and the soldiers did not want to fight. But one cause was insufficient. The congress stole the left Social Revolutionary agrarian program and soon the majority of the peasants were persuaded. This was the strategy which, according to Lenin, rendered victory simple.)

During the evening of November 9, Lenin participated in another meeting ; thereafter he did not appear for three days in the Smolny, the

Bolshevik headquarters which had now become the seat of government. During the following week he was busy at the headquarters, then eclipsed himself again on November 19, 20, and 21. The Bolsheviks introduced the eight-hour working day and expropriated land and certain other types of property. They bestowed upon all nationalities in Russia the right to self-determination (including the right to secede) and abolished religious privileges. All existing secret treaties were cancelled. A three-month armistice was offered to all belligerents, and hostilities were suspended early in December. Hostile newspapers and counter-revolutionary activities were suppressed.

Many Bolsheviks argued that, since a purely Bolshevik government could maintain itself only through terror, a coalition government should be established. Lenin demurred. The first government crisis occurred within the first week of Lenin's administration.

The Poles, Ukrainians, and Finns declared their independence. By contrast the Bolsheviks maintained their power in Russia by relying on Lettish and Chinese mercenaries : those were the only troops they could depend on. The Germans paid for the military services rendered in behalf of the Bolsheviks. A few weeks earlier, Lenin had told Shotman that for the Bolsheviks to stay in power all money would have to be "annulled." Shotman asked what would replace the currency. Lenin replied, "We shall put all printing presses in motion and within a few days print as much as we need."⁽²⁾ Things were not that simple, but the printing presses were run for more than eight hours every day.

The Germans had used fraternization tactics throughout the preceding months in an attempt to weaken the Russian army and stimulate the Bolshevik revolution. Now this same weapon was available to the Bolsheviks to initiate the next round of the world revolution and to revolutionize Germany and Austria-Hungary. Quite a few prisoners of war had joined the Bolsheviks so the maneuver was entirely feasible and fraternization was increased. Yet the Germans forced Lenin to stop all fraternization with German soldiers immediately.⁽³⁾ The Germans

obviously could hold the threat of blackmail over Lenin, who was now beginning to pay the penalty for his Machiavellian politics. His great dream of using the Germans to make revolution in Russia and then carry the revolution into Germany could not be fulfilled. This much became evident within the first month of his rule. And to leave no doubt about this, the German Minister at Stockholm, Hellmuth Freiherr Lucius von Stuedten, warned Vorovsky “in a discussion lasting several hours . . . emphatically against trying any experiments with internal German affairs.”⁽⁴⁾

On December 15 a formal armistice was concluded with Germany, and on December 17, Lenin signed a decree ordering the demobilization of the Russian army.⁽⁵⁾ Simultaneously, the Bolsheviks established a terror machine, the dreaded “Cheka” or Extraordinary Commission. On December 23, 1917, the Menshevik organ, *Novy Luch*, summarized the situation by saying that the Bolsheviks were ruining the country by controlling production and creating unemployment. The Bolsheviks had originally favored the dismemberment of the Russian empire, but now they were fighting the autonomous states which refused to submit to their rule. They resuscitated the tsarist police system ; and, instead of introducing a dictatorship of the proletariat, they established a personal dictatorship by Lenin.

On January 11, 1918, in the midst of a war which had merely been interrupted by a truce arrangement, two additional military decrees were issued. One abolished all ranks ; the other stipulated that commanders were to be elected by soldiers’ committees and commanders of units larger than regiments be chosen by soldiers’ congresses. The military commanders were to have no disciplinary prerogatives. These decrees effectively destroyed the army. The massive desertion rate, which had characterized events so far, degenerated into a spontaneous demobilization.⁽⁶⁾ The Bolsheviks claimed that the army had to be destroyed to preclude army counterrevolutionary attempts ; naturally, other measures could have been taken to attain the same objective. No attempt was made to build up new and dependable units or to halt

progressive demoralization. For two months, the Bolshevik strategists eagerly busied themselves destroying the remnants of Russia's military power. The Germans could not have asked for more.

Indeed, on January 3, 1918, an unnamed German socialist—probably Kurt Eisner—complained in Gorky's newspaper, *Novaya Zhizn* (which had been partially financed by German money^[7]), that the Bolsheviks were enabling the Germans to start an offensive in the West. The German socialist warned that by resuming economic relations with Germany, the Bolsheviks would replenish the Kaiser's food and raw material reserves ; thus, the Bolsheviks were saving Imperial Germany and were aiding in the preparation of "the most cruel triumph of German militarism." Gorky's paper commented that the Bolsheviks were misleading the masses by claiming they could obtain a "democratic peace" from Germany. Gorky described the delaying tactics as a sham. In response, the Bolsheviks spread the rumor that they were delaying negotiations until a revolution would break out in Central Europe.

The Bolsheviks were not sufficiently accommodating to the Germans. On January 7, 1918, the German Foreign Secretary cabled his agents that the time had come to provide a few broad hints through the available safe channels but not in public. "If the truth were to become known in Russia . . . then the Bolsheviks will be finished. Their own dishonesty will ruin them."^[8] Subsequently, Lenin improved delivery and the Germans never found it necessary to disclose the truth.

Lenin, Krupskaya, and Maria Ulyanova spent Christmas at an unnamed place in Finland. They apparently left Russia on Christmas Eve (January 6, 1918, New Style) and enjoyed "that spotless Finnish cleanliness with its white curtains everywhere."^[9]

Lenin was experiencing his customary health troubles. He began the composition of three articles but could not finish them. The Germans reported from Petrograd that he was spending a few days in a Finnish sanatorium but had been recalled to the capital. There was not much opportunity for relaxation after his return. Krupskaya reported that

between the middle of January and the end of February she and Lenin went for walks along the Neva. This sounds a bit too hazardous for a dictator's health treatment.

On January 15 someone fired at Lenin while he was riding in his car. The vehicle was struck by four bullets. Lenin's life was saved by Platten, who was sitting beside him and pushed his head down. [\(10\)](#) Platten was slightly wounded in the hand.

In an extremely difficult situation, Lenin had insisted upon coming to power. It seems that he should have had a formulated program through which the great promise of socialism (or communism) could be fulfilled. The old vexatious system of ranks and classes (*chin*) had been abolished by the democratic regime. The Bolsheviks instituted a few reforms, such as the adoption of the Western calendar and the eight-hour day (which for many years was ignored), whose introduction required no revolution. They abolished the institutions through which the economy had been directed, but were unable to invent better instruments. They advocated self-determination but did not permit it. They adopted the agricultural program of the Social Revolutionaries, but did not fulfill this program either ; yet they destroyed genuine agrarian reforms which had been accomplished by the tsarist regime.

Thus, the Bolsheviks cheated both the minority nationalities and the peasants, and alienated and destroyed the middle and upper classes. They claimed to speak for the proletariat but betrayed the workers. The Bolsheviks in power were not a labor government but a group of intellectuals with a slanted education. They claimed they knew how to build socialism and they promised the proletariat better treatment. While they were able to disrupt the existing system, they did not know how to fashion a workable socialist system. They even betrayed the soldiers : though they released many from duty, they failed to tell them that this act was at Germany's bidding. They cared nothing about democratic peace, but soon were to establish a new army to fight a protracted civil war. They had lied and cheated their way to power.

Now that they had seized the government, they knew how to preserve and enlarge their power but proved unable to use their strength constructively for their professed purposes.

Several socialist parties and socialists from practically all groups were willing to participate in constructive work. If there had been a positive program, a broadly based government could have commanded the loyalty of the people in the true sense of the word. In the absence of constructive ideas, it would have been advisable to permit—in fact, stimulate—discussion on socialist policy. But the Bolsheviks were terrified of free debate and abolished free speech without delay. Nor did the Bolsheviks wish to share their power. They intended to rule by unrestricted dictatorship, not in the sense Lenin originally had promised (i.e., active participation by the masses in public affairs and total suppression of bureaucracy), but in the sense of unrestricted power exercised by a small minority. The Bolsheviks had so little confidence in their own ability to create that they preferred fear to mass support. They lacked the wisdom and humility to use their undoubted victory to make peace with their fellow socialists and thus spare their country an era of endless anguish.

Some of the Bolsheviks with more intelligence and integrity recognized that this policy would have catastrophic results. But this program was Lenin's brainchild and reflected his psychology. He had become the inviolate and infallible ruler. To paraphrase Santayana : after he had forgotten his aims, he was strongly motivated to redouble his efforts.

1 Vladimir D. Bonch-Bruyevich, *Na Boyevikh Postakh Fevral'skoi i Oktyabr'skoi Revolyutsii* (Moscow, 1981), p. 119f.

2 Shotman, p. 417

3 Fraternization was stopped on November 13, 1917, at 11 P.M., and on November 14, *Prikaz No. 3*, signed by Krylenko, ordered the immediate cessation of firing and fraternization on all fronts (*Istoricheskii Arkhiv* [1957], No. 5, p. 156-160).

4 Zeman, p. 105.

5 *Istoricheskii Arkhiv*, *op. cit.*, p. 154.

6 Mikhail Bonch-Bruyevich, *op. cit.*, p. 260ff.

7 Zeman, p. 92.

8 Zeman, p. 112f., prints an instruction from Berlin to the legation at Stockholm that it was “necessary to have serious words with Vorovsky.” “Appeals to our nation, which include revolutionary matter and calls to our soldiers to disobey orders and lay down their arms . . . we must regard as improper and intolerable interferences in our internal affairs.”

9 Krupskaya, *op. cit.*, p. 425.

10 Platten had succeeded finally in being admitted to Russia ; Radek also had arrived. On December 20, 1917, the Associated Press offered Radek the post of chief Russian correspondent, which he declined.

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German Foreign Office Documents on Financial Support to the Bolsheviks in 1917

by
George Katkov

Document No. 1 reproduced on page 189 in an English translation will contribute to the elucidation of one of the most controversial questions of recent history: that of the relations of the Imperial German Government with the Russian Bolshevik Party in the period between the fall of the Russian Monarchy and the seizure of power by the Bolsheviks in 1917. The document has been found in one of the files of the German Ministry of Foreign Affairs, now in the custody of the British authorities. It is a typescript of five pages dated 3 December 1917 with a number of corrections and marginal notes. The caption 'Tel. Hughes' provides for transmission by the Hughes direct line telecommunication system. The message was addressed by the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Baron R. von Kühlmann, to an official who was to communicate its content orally to the Kaiser. Document No. II shows that the message was duly dispatched and received; and that the Kaiser expressed agreement with its contents.

Document No. II is the deciphered text of the reply to Document No. I, dated 4 December 1917, from the German General Headquarters and signed 'Gruenau', an official of the German Foreign Office attached to the person of the Emperor.

The urgency and frankness of the message are due to the circumstances in which it was written. The German Government was at the time about

to dispatch a special mission to Petrograd to start negotiations on the return of German prisoners of war and the resumption of trade relations with the newly formed Bolshevik Government. The mission was to be headed by the representative of the Foreign Office, Count Mirbach, and a representative of the GHQ, Admiral Kurt Keyserling. Besides, the Armistice negotiations in Brest-Litovsk were about to begin. The outcome of the war might well depend to a large extent on the success of these negotiations. The outline of German policy towards Russia had been discussed between the Kaiser and his Foreign Minister at some length on a previous occasion. The Minister had now to draw up the necessary instructions for these various actions. He wished to have the Kaiser's approval of their general tenor, and as the Kaiser was then at the GHQ the State Secretary had recourse to telegraphic communication. The text was then filed with the other top secret documents concerning, for the most part, affairs involving the Kaiser personally. The Minister felt it necessary to remind the Monarch of certain recent political activities. This takes up the first four or five sentences of Document No. I, where it is stated as a fact that financial support was given to the Bolsheviks by the Germans in the spring and summer of 1917. These statements are important, for it is difficult to assume that Kühlmann lied to his Sovereign. They make plain that the German Government had given financial support to the Bolsheviks on a considerable scale; that this support was afforded in a continuous flow through various channels and 'under a variety of labels'; and finally that it was given with the aim of weakening Russia as a partner in the Entente and of detaching her from her allies.

These statements of fact differ considerably from the two main opposing views put forward regarding the relations of the Germans with the Bolsheviks.^[1]

According to one view, all accusations of contact with the Germans were counter-revolutionary fabrications, invented to mislead and to discredit the leaders of the Revolution. This of course is still the thesis

of official Soviet historiography. But the influence of this idea extended far beyond the borders of Communist orthodoxy.

That German agents were seeking to undermine army discipline by inciting soldiers to attack their officers was suspected from the very beginning of the February revolution. When, at one of the earliest meetings of the Provisional Government, in March, the Kadet leader P.N. Milyukov referred casually to interference by German agents, Kerensky, then Minister of Justice and 'the hostage of Revolutionary Democracy', shouted in tones of hysteria that there was no place for him in a gathering where the glorious Russian Revolution could be calumniated as a machination of the Germans; he left the meeting, announcing his resignation, which needless to say, he almost immediately withdrew.^[2] Such was the repulsion felt in 1917 at any suggestion of the contamination of the revolutionary process by German influence, that even the arrival via Germany of the sealed train with the Bolshevik leaders did not produce anything like the 'furious barking of the Defencists and the Bourgeoisie', which Lenin had expected. All that happened was that he (Lenin) failed to secure the official approval of the Executive Committee of the Soviet for his decision to take advantage of German favours. Not until the Bolsheviks had developed their propaganda in the army, inciting the soldiers to insubordination and urging fraternization with the German troops, did the Provisional Government start a cautious investigation of possible contacts with the Germans. The collapse of the Imperial police machine and the disruption of the military counter-espionage service (which had worked with the secret police) made this investigation very difficult. However, with the aid of the allied counter-espionage services and following the confession of an agent, recruited by the enemy while a prisoner of war in Germany, certain information was gathered on which legal proceedings against the Bolshevik leaders could be initiated.^[3] By the end of June 1917, with the failure of the Kerensky offensive and the progressive decline in army morale, the arrest of Bolshevik leaders for treasonable activities was seriously considered. It has even been suggested that the abortive Bolshevik *coup* in early July was motivated by the hope of

preventing these arrests. The political effectiveness of accusations of contact with Germans was demonstrated during the July disturbances. When troops of the Petrograd garrison began to waver in their support of the government and of the Petrograd Soviet against the Bolshevik mutineers, the Minister of Justice Pereverzev arranged for some of the evidence against the Bolshevik leadership to be published by two journalists; these revelations changed the mood of the troops and greatly contributed to the collapse of the rising. Although that evidence was tenuous enough it was widely believed, because it gave to an ordinary patriotic Russian a more plausible explanation of Bolshevik defeatism and how it worked than the Bolsheviks themselves with their Zimmerwald ideology could provide. Kerensky had left Petrograd on the first day of the rising. On his return, by then vested with almost dictatorial powers, he ordered the arrest of Lenin, Zinoviev, and other Bolshevik leaders together with a number of their suspected intermediaries with the Germans. Some of the latter, *e.g.* a woman by the name of Sumenson and the lawyer Kozlovsky, were in fact arrested in Petrograd on 7 July. Two of the others involved, the notorious A. Helphand (alias Dr Parvus) and his close collaborator Fürstenberg-Haniecki were abroad. At the same time however Kerensky forced his Minister of Justice, Pereverzev, to resign. The reason given officially at the time (and later repeated in Kerensky's numerous personal memoirs) was that, by prematurely divulging the allegations against the Bolsheviks, Pereverzev had wrecked a deeply laid scheme of the Provisional Government--namely to arrest Fürstenberg-Haniecki on the Swedish-Finnish frontier; this individual was believed to be about to cross into Russia carrying large sums of German money and documents compromising the Bolsheviks.^[4]

Pereverzev's resignation discredited the revelations published on his orders. His selected publicists, Grigory Alexinsky (former member of the 2nd Duma) and Pankratov (former political prisoner), lacked the authority to sustain the accusations. And indeed very soon after the shock produced by these revelations a significant reversal in the mood of the so-called 'Revolutionary Democracy' took place. First came protests

against wholesale accusations aimed at the Bolsheviks as a Party; if some Bolsheviks were German agents or if they had touched German money they should, it was said, be put on trial, but in the new Revolutionary Russia there could be no place for the persecution of a political party as such, however misguided it might be. At the request of the Bolsheviks the Central Executive Committee of the Soviets set up its own Commission for the investigation of the case of Lenin and others, and appealed--pending this inquiry--to all comrades to stop the spreading of slanderous allegations. This Commission later joined the Government's Commission of Inquiry. While these Commissions were leisurely pursuing their investigations the suspicion gained ground that the whole affair had been staged by officers and 'counter-revolutionaries' with the aim of discrediting the leaders of Revolutionary Democracy. The fact that such accusations could have induced the wavering troops of the Petrograd garrison to side in an armed conflict with the Provisional Government convinced the Left that they amounted to a dangerous weapon in the hands of the Kadet Party and the Defencists. And yet, Lenin's flight into hiding (he had disappeared by 7 July when an attempt was made to arrest him) seems to have greatly disturbed many of his followers and associates. The reaction of a man like Sukhanov is highly significant. Having mentioned, in his memoirs, the 'monstrous slander' (of having touched German money) directed against Lenin, Sukhanov goes on to express his amazement at the course of action Lenin had chosen. 'Any other mortal', Sukhanov writes, 'would have demanded an investigation and trial, even under the most unfavourable conditions. Any other mortal would personally and publicly have done everything possible to rehabilitate himself. But Lenin proposed that others, his adversaries, should do this, while he sought safety in flight. ... In the whole world only he could have behaved in this way'.^[5] Sukhanov does not share Lenin's professed opinion, that the impartiality of the Courts under the Provisional Government could not be trusted. Moreover Lenin, according to Sukhanov, could have had no difficulty in disproving 'the nonsensical accusation', which 'in a little time dispersed by itself--like smoke'. The only explanation of Lenin's behaviour which occurred to Sukhanov was Lenin's superhuman nature

('... no mortal would ...'). Kühlmann's revelation should make a less metaphysical explanation at least probable. Lenin might have known -- or at least suspected -- that the money he was using was German money and that the accusations were in substance true. Then his action would appear only human--all too human.

At that time, however, the Provisional Government had only indirect evidence against Lenin and not entirely reliable witnesses. The persons arraigned by the Public Prosecutor on 22 July 1917 for organizing the rising and for treason were never put on trial, and those who were arrested were released on bail in September; although, according to the counter-espionage officer Nikitine, some of them had made pretty full confessions.^[6] It should be emphasized that if the accusations dispersed 'like smoke' in the turbulent atmosphere of the last months of the Provisional Government they were never proved to be false before an impartial tribunal. Nor were they forgotten, least of all by the Bolsheviks themselves. They became indeed ammunition in the arsenal of Communist propaganda. Lenin refers to them as the 'Russian Dreyfusiade'; Trotsky speaks with temperamental scorn of 'the great slander'; members of the Institute of the Red Professors headed by M.N. Pokrovsky ridiculed them. More surprising is the fact that impartial historians in the West seem--as time went on--to attach less and less importance to accusations which at a given moment threatened to cost the Bolsheviks their popular support in Russia and possibly their very existence as a party. In his monumental history of the Bolshevik Revolution E.H. Carr makes no reference whatever to the 'great slander', to the alleged links between Bolsheviks and Germans, or to the question of German money. In his account of the steps taken for the arrest of the Bolshevik leaders he makes no mention of the treason issue^[7]; the reader is left to understand that the intended arrests were merely part of the police measures to suppress the July rising. Of course, even the attempt to examine impartially allegations which have been branded as counter-revolutionary, would have caused offence to those who share the 'great slander' school of thought. On the other hand, only by examining all the possible causes of Bolshevik success in 1917 can one

provide an explanation for the inevitable course of historical events, and the German money might have been one of these causes even though Kühlmann's estimate of its importance might be self-flattering and exaggerated.

A careful study of the German archives will probably occasion some re-thinking and re-writing of the history of the Russian Revolution. Some of the hero-worship of Lenin might be affected by it. Not only to his own Party, but to the Left wing of the Russian Revolutionary Government, Lenin's personal character was the best guarantee that he had never worked with German money. He himself never claimed, as he well might have after the German collapse, to have successfully carried out a Machiavellian plan, and beaten German imperialism with the German money the Germans had provided. On the contrary, he always maintained that the accusations were a monstrous and malign attack on his revolutionary honour. The result was that those who, like Bernstein, sincerely--and, as we now see, rightly--believed that he was supported by German money were ostracized as counter-revolutionaries or renegades.

The documents here reproduced should do away once and for all with the legend of a Bolshevik Party strictly adhering to the principles of revolutionary ethics which they professed in common with other Russian revolutionaries. Suspicions that Bolsheviks were financially supported by the German Government were not slander but a fair guess.

And yet no comfort can be derived from these documents by those who believed that Lenin and his associates were agents of the German Government or the German General Staff. This view, spread among Russian anti-Communists of all creeds, is shared by Kerensky and has found a protagonist in the former Kadet leader and historian of the Russian Revolution, P.N. Milyukov. According to this view, Lenin came to an agreement with the Germans by which the latter should help him to seize power in exchange for the demoralization of the Russian Army and the conclusion of a degrading separate peace.

The absence of any documentary evidence for the existence of such an agreement between the Germans and Lenin was largely compensated by speculation on the possible motives of both sides in helping each other: did not the Germans show exceptional solicitude in letting the Bolsheviks return home, and did not Lenin repay them by working for the destruction of the Russian army ? Those prone to such conclusions found them confirmed by the fact that the Bolsheviks were receiving German money. The evidence for this was not watertight but all these assumptions and guesses formed one consistent although sensational picture, which in a time of acute political struggle had great power over the imaginations of all those unaffected by the spell of revolutionary enthusiasm or of the mystique of Lenin's superhuman personality. The anti-Communist movement in the Civil War found it politically expedient to represent Lenin as a paid agent of the Germans. The 'Whites' were looking for allied support and this--they believed--would be forthcoming more readily if intervention in Russia could be represented as part of the general war against the Central Powers and their allies. In support of this conception, in the winter of 1917-18 a series of documents allegedly smuggled from Petrograd to South Russia was produced. They purported to be originals, photo-copies and copies of State papers taken from the files of the Bolshevik Government, and they purported to prove close and organized contacts between the German authorities and the Bolshevik Party both in 1918 and before.^[8] However, for those who already believed that Lenin had received German money, the Sisson Papers--as these documents, since published in the United States, are called--were only belated additional proofs of his being a German agent. Ironically, now that the fact of German financial aid is established there is even less reason to believe that Lenin was a German agent (unless one uses the word 'agent' in a Leninist-Stalinist sense, in which even a scholar carrying out independent research with the help of a fund established by an industrialist qualifies for the title of an 'agent of bourgeois imperialism'). It is obvious from Kühlmann's report to the Kaiser that in giving their support to the Communists the Germans were giving a 'grant in aid' to an independent subversive movement and not financing political agents and spies

working on instructions. In the first years of the war the Germans seem to have favoured the various separatist movements of national minorities, but after the fall of the monarchy the Bolsheviks had their day.

The 'various channels and varying labels' of the aid to the Bolsheviks may not be easy to determine. Kühlmann mentions in a telegram to General Headquarters dated 29 September 1917 that action in such matters was undertaken by the German Foreign Office in close collaboration with the Political Section of the General Staff of the Army in the Field (Colonel von Hülsen), and it is possible that details will be found in the German military archives.^[9] As far as the German Foreign Office is concerned there can be no doubt that the German Government's official denial, in 1921, of the existence of any documents referring to the financial support of Russian Bolsheviks in Foreign Office archives was less than candid. The files of the Berne Legation contain, for instance, an 'absolute secret' report of 30 April 1917 in which the German Minister in Berne, Baron Romberg, relates his conversation with the Swiss social democrat, Fritz Platten (who had made the final arrangements for the first sealed train and had accompanied Lenin and his fellow travellers from Switzerland to the Finnish border). Platten conveyed the gratitude of the Russians for the efficiency of the arrangements made, expressed his regrets that he was prevented from entering Russia, and gave a hearsay description of the enthusiastic reception given to Lenin on his arrival in Petrograd, where, according to Platten, three quarters of the workers supported him. 'It was clear from what Platten told me', Romberg goes on in his report, 'that the émigrés are very short of money for their propaganda, while their opponents naturally have at their disposal unlimited means. The funds collected for the use of émigrés fell mainly into the hands of social patriots. I am arranging for a confidential agent to investigate the very delicate question as to whether there is any possible way of letting them have money without their finding this objectionable. In the meantime I would be grateful if I might be informed by telegram whether the

revolutionaries are already receiving financial help through another channel'.

No reply, telegraphic or otherwise, is to be found in this particular file^[10], and the trail--as so often happens when highly confidential matters are concerned--disappears. There is however a reference to the efforts of Romberg's confidential agent in a file concerned with the activities of another German agent, a certain Alexander Keskuela. This file contains a report from the German Military Attaché in Berne dated 9 May 1917 to his Minister. Romberg's agent, referred to as Herr Baier, had written on 4 May to the Military Attaché that following preliminary soundings with the Bolshevik, Dr Shklovsky, and the Menshevik, P. Axelrod, he had had a further interview with representatives of the various nuances of the peace-minded Socialist Party in Zurich' (Baier does not say who they were) who were interested in promoting an immediate separate peace at all costs between Russia and Germany. The question of financial support had been discussed. Herr Baier had offered to contribute a substantial sum, and had hinted that other wealthy friends of his might do the same. He summarized the result of these negotiations as follows: '(i) The personality of the donor should guarantee that the source of the finances is unimpeachable. (ii) The donor and the intermediary should be enabled to cross the Russian frontier with the money, having secured an official or semi-official recommendation for this purpose. (iii) To facilitate immediate use funds should be brought in cash and not in other valuables, the encashment of which might present difficulties and attract attention. Swiss currency would be the easiest to convey, to convert and to use'. Needless to say Herr Baier considered himself a reliable intermediary for such an operation.

These communications throw some light on the nature of the channels and labels. The peace-minded Russian socialists contacted expressed satisfaction at the idea that wealthy comrades and friends would afford financial support to their propaganda. The peace-minded socialists are obviously none other than the Zimmerwald Left, of whom Lenin was the

most extreme defeatist. Melgounoff in his above-quoted book reports a conversation in 1917 in Moscow with the historian Pokrovsky, who told him that the Bolsheviks had received money from German Social Democrats. This might well have been a source acceptable to the Bolsheviks, although socialists of different creed would probably have considered it unsatisfactory. The material published by Nikitine indicates that the sums transferred through Madame Sumenson came from Fürstenberg-Haniecki (a member of the Polish Social Democratic Party). Money coming through this channel could be considered as coming from 'friends and comrades'. 'Dr Parvus' was by then universally known as an agent of the German Government: he had behaved with so little discretion that Lenin refused to see him on his way to Russia and avoided direct contact with him. But Lenin throughout maintained contact with Fürstenberg-Haniecki, who was Parvus's employee in business, associate in politics, and co-conspirator in German intrigues: and in July 1917 *Pravda* went out of its way to defend the man's revolutionary integrity.

In any case it is now clear that whatever the labels may have been, the money was that of the German Government. Will the German Archives throw a light on whether or how far Lenin was aware of the fact ? The content of the high-level document here reproduced seems to indicate that detailed research into the lower strata of German-Bolshevik contacts would prove rewarding.

DOCUMENT NO. I

BERLIN, 3rd December 1917.

Add A3 4486.

Tel, Hughes I.Z.

To Tel. No. 1771

The disruption of the Entente and the subsequent creation of political combinations agreeable to us constitute the most important war aim of our diplomacy. Russia Appeared (to me)^[11] to be the weakest link in the enemy's chain. The task therefore was gradually to loosen it and, when possible, to remove it. This was the purpose of the subversive activity we caused to be carried out in Russia behind the front--in the first place (vigorous)^[11] promotion of separatist tendencies and support of the Bolsheviki. It was not until the Bolsheviki had received from us a steady flow of funds through various channels and under varying labels that they were in a position to be able to build up their main organ, *Pravda*, to conduct energetic propaganda^[12] and appreciably to extend the originally narrow basis of their party. The Bolsheviki have now come into power; how long they will retain power cannot yet be foreseen. They need peace in order to strengthen their own position; on the other hand it is entirely in our interest that we should exploit the period while they are in power, which may be a short one, in order to attain firstly an armistice and then, if possible, peace.^[13] The conclusion of a separate peace would mean the achievement of the desired war aim, namely, a breach between Russia and her Allies. The amount of tension necessarily caused by such a breach would determine the degree of Russia's dependence on Germany and her future relations with us. Once cast out and cast off by her former Allies, abandoned financially, Russia will be forced to seek our support. We shall be able to provide help for Russia in various ways; firstly in the rehabilitation of the railways; (I have in mind a German-Russian Commission--under our control--which would undertake the rational and coordinated exploitation of the railway lines so as to ensure speedy resumption of freight movement) then the provision of a substantial loan, which Russia requires to maintain her state machine. This could take the form of an advance on the security of grain, raw materials, etc., etc., to be provided by Russia and shipped under the control of the above-mentioned Commission. Aid on such a basis--the scope to be increased as and when necessary--would in my opinion bring about a growing rapprochement between the two countries.

Austria-Hungary will regard the rapprochement with distrust and not without apprehension. I would interpret the excessive eagerness of Count Czernin to come to terms with the Russians as a desire to forestall us and to prevent Germany and Russia arriving at an intimate relationship inconvenient to the Danube Monarchy. There is no need for us to compete for Russia's good will. We are strong enough to wait with equanimity; we are in a far better position than Austria-Hungary to offer Russia what she needs for the reconstruction of her State. I view future developments in the East with confidence but I think it expedient for the time being to maintain a certain reserve in our attitude to the Austro-Hungarian Government in all matters including the Polish question which concern both monarchies so as to preserve a free hand for all eventualities.

The above-mentioned considerations lie, I venture to believe, within the framework of the directives given me by His Majesty. I request you to report to His Majesty accordingly and to transmit to me by telegram the All-highest instructions.

St. S.
K.

DOCUMENT NO. 2
A.S. 4607
Telegram.

General Headquarters, 4th December 1917, 7.30 p.m.
Received 8.25 p.m.
The Imperial Legation Councillor at the Foreign Office.
Decypher

With reference to your telegram No. 1925 A.S. 4486. His Majesty the Kaiser has expressed his agreement with Your Excellency's exposé

concerning a possible rapprochement with Russia.

(signature)
GRUENAU.

1 The best analysis of the question is to be found in S. Melgounoff, *Zolotoi Nemetsky Klyuch Bolshevikov*, published by the author (Paris, 1940). Melgounoff uses mainly Russian sources.

2 See *Arkhiv Russkoy Revoliutsii*, ed. T.V. Gessen, 2nd ed., Vol. I (Berlin, 1922), p. 23.

3 B.V. Nikitine, *The Fatal Years, Fresh Revelations on a Chapter of Underground History* (London, Hodge, 1938). Nikitine served in a counter-espionage service hurriedly organized in Petrograd by the Provisional Government.

4 See Kerensky, *The Catastrophe* (New York, Appleton, 1927), pp. 239 ff. Kerensky's view is opposed by Nikitine, *op. cit.*, p. 169, and by Melgounoff, *op. cit.*, p. 116.

5 N.N. Sukhanov, *The Russian Revolution 1917*. Translated by Joel Carmichael (London, Oxford University Press, 1955), p. 472.

6 Nikitine, *op. cit.*, p. 124, and Kerensky, *op. cit.*, p. 232.

7 E.H. Carr, *The Bolshevik Revolution 1917-23* vol. I (London, Macmillan, 1950-3), p. 91.

8 The authenticity of the Sisson Papers has often been put in question. See Melgounoff, *op. cit.*, pp. 131 ff.

9 In his reply to this telegram Ludendorff wired on 2 October 1917 expressing his gratitude for the large sums which the Foreign Office had allocated for the support of subversive movements in Russia.

10 A note on the text of Romberg's dispatch to the German Foreign Office mentions that the reply to this query had been communicated orally but does not say what it was.

11 Crossed out in the original.

12 The words 'to conduct energetic propaganda' written on the margin and inserted in the text.

13 An asterisk in the original text refers to a handwritten marginal note saying: 'There is no question of supporting the Bolsheviks in the future'. It remains doubtful whether these words were included in the text as telegraphed or whether they are of a later date.

